

# Quakers Visit Russia

*Edited by*  
**KATHLEEN LONSDALE**

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KATHLEEN LONSDALE

*Published by the East-West Relations Group  
of the Friends' Peace Committee,  
Friends House, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.*

First Edition . . . July 1952  
Reprinted . . . October 1952

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## Declaration to Charles II, 1660

*"We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatever; this is our testimony to the whole world. The Spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we certainly know and testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ nor for the Kingdoms of this world."*

## Message of Goodwill to All Men, 1950

*(Issued in English, French, German and Russian)*

*"In face of deepening fear and mutual distrust throughout the world, the Society of Friends (Quakers) is moved to declare goodwill to all men everywhere. Friends appeal for the avoidance of words and deeds that increase suspicion and ill-feeling, for renewed efforts at understanding and for positive attempts to build a true peace. They are convinced that reconciliation is possible. They hope that this simple word, translated into many tongues, may itself help to create the new spirit in which the resources of the world will be diverted from war-like purposes and applied to the welfare of mankind."*



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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

**T**HIS book tells how seven Quakers went to Russia and what they did and saw there.

This first chapter seeks to explain just why they went. It paints in the background to their visit by telling how it came about and why they were appointed to go by the Executive Committee of the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain.

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has for 300 years given to the world a clear peace testimony. For Friends it is an essential part of Christian living. They believe that war is always wrong, and that this applies not only to international war, but also to civil or class war. They have therefore tried to act as peace-makers in all human relationships, private and business, national and international. They are opposed to all preparations for war, to re-armament and to conscription for military training, which they regard as an offence against the human spirit and as inconsistent with the teachings and practice of Christianity.

Friends have therefore been deeply concerned at the deterioration in international relations since the end of the Second World War, at the deepening cleavage between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union and at the increasing measures of war preparation, which have diverted enthusiasm, energy, money and materials from the alleviation of poverty, disease and ignorance.

Friends believe that religion is a way of life: "To be a Christian," said William Penn, "is to be like Christ." To work in order that fear, prejudice, injustice, poverty and ill-health may be overcome is part of true religion. They therefore sympathise deeply with the Marxist aims of social and racial justice; but they have been repelled by many aspects of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and of Communist and Soviet practice. The Communist philosophy is materialistic, atheistic and hostile to all religion; Friends regard

themselves as part of the Church of Christ. Marxists interpret history in terms of inevitable conflict ; Friends believe deeply in the need for reconciliation of man with God ; they work for this end and for the reconciliation of men with one another. Lenin preached that morality should be subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat ; Friends believe that integrity, love, generosity, truth, are absolutes ; they are the qualities of God, and are therefore bound, in the long run, to overcome hatred, suspicion, greed, error. Friends indeed have set such a high value on truth that many early Quakers (a name given first in derision) were imprisoned for their refusal to take the oath of loyalty or to swear at all, on the ground that this implied a double standard of truth. Friends recognise the existence of evils, but believe that the only way of overcoming them is to use truth, love and generosity. If men want to achieve either peace or justice, it is useless to employ falsehood, to feel suspicion or hatred, to be revengeful or resentful. Such methods as these are certain to fail to achieve good aims.

Moreover freedom is an essential part of the philosophy of Friends ; freedom to choose ; persuasion and not compulsion. Even co-operation with God they believe must be free and not forced. Any form of totalitarianism is therefore abhorrent to them ; men must not be taught to think alike ; still less must they be forced to think alike. At the same time Friends realise that freedom has a social as well as a political significance, just as it has a mental as well as a physical meaning. Men or women bound by poverty to a life of continual toil, and yet living in constant fear of unemployment, are not free.

Nor can men think clearly when they are ill, hungry, afraid or angry ; and since Friends accept Christ's teaching concerning the individual value of each man to God and their responsibility for one another, it follows that those who are afflicted or even depraved need special love and care. Such Friends as William Penn, John Woolman, John Bellers, Elizabeth Fry, realised clearly that it is in justice, kindness and mercy that the seeds of peace are sown. When offered a captaincy in Cromwell's army, George Fox said, in 1651, that he lived "in virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars." This Friends believe to be both possible and essential.

It follows from the deep concern that Friends have felt both in regard to the increase of international tensions, to the growth of materialism and of disregard for individual rights, and to the increasing destructiveness and indiscriminate nature of weapons of war, that the members of the Society, both individually and corporately, should have observed with interest the growth of the **Partisans of Peace** movement, which began with a meeting of

intellectuals at Wroclaw in Poland in 1948, and continued at Paris Stockholm and Warsaw in 1949 and 1950.

The fact that this movement was not officially encouraged in the West would not have prevented Friends from supporting it if they had felt that it was genuinely likely to promote peacemaking. This, however, they did not see clearly. It was clear that the idea of the movement had originated in the Soviet Union and that it was widely supported there and in the satellite countries. This again was not in its disfavour if the support were genuine and free ; but was it ? The movement also received much support in other countries, including those of the West, from perplexed people who honestly desire peace and who grasp at any simply-expressed documentary statement of that general desire. Yet the very wording of the documents put out by the Partisans of Peace was belligerent, and not reconciling, while the speeches of participants in various Peace Congresses, some of which had been printed *in extenso*, were not couched in the language of peace or of understanding ; they placed all the blame for the Korean War and the serious international situation generally on the Western Powers and, in particular, on the U.S.A., with no corresponding criticism of any feature whatever of Soviet policy.

The movement, therefore, seemed to be neither independent nor objective, and it was certainly not pacifist. It did not take much scepticism to see that the Stockholm Peace Appeal and the Five-Power Pact Petition simply reiterated, in terms which seemed to threaten rather than to appeal, the Soviet attitude in the deliberations of the United Nations Assembly towards the knotty problems of the international control of atomic energy and the recognition of the People's Government in China, and begged all the difficult questions which make it doubtful whether simple declarations and pacts, without goodwill or good faith behind them, can ever bring real peace. It was possible that this peace movement was only intended to last until Stalin was ready to make a big attack on or within the countries outside the Communist circle, that it was intended to consolidate the peoples of the Soviet Union behind their rulers, while promoting disunity in the Western Powers. It was possible that the appeals that were being made to Friends, both individually and collectively, to support this Movement, were simply intended to give it a cloak of respectability and to "use" the Society of Friends, while the fundamental principles in which Friends believe were being contemptuously rejected.

Now Friends, like most other people, object to being "used." They may be idealists, but they are not simpletons. They do not object to co-operation with non-pacifists ; for many years they have been among the strongest supporters of the National Peace Council,



a British organisation uniting pacifists and non-pacifists who believe in the wisdom of peace by negotiation. But they were not prepared to give passive assent to any movement or to support it without close examination.

Nor, on the other hand, were they prepared to assume automatically, as so many good people had done, that the movement was bogus. And even if it were, that still did not mean that it would be impossible to discuss real peacemaking with those who were sponsoring it. Friends believe that it is always right to be willing to discuss problems face-to-face; and that it is particularly wise to do so when there appear to be fundamental differences of principle involved, as in this case.

In 1854, for example, three Friends had been appointed by the Society to visit the Czar of Russia and to make a personal appeal to him so to modify his policy as to avoid the impending war with Great Britain. It has been recorded that they were so successful in this mission that the Crimean War might have been avoided, had they been equally successful in modifying British policy at home. This does not mean that Friends have neglected or shirked the duty of speaking plainly or appealing, as they felt it to be necessary, to the statesmen and people of their own countries. They have done so frequently, and have nearly always been listened to with courtesy, even when their appeal has not been successful in its object.

In May 1950, the executive body of the Society of Friends in Great Britain (historically known as the **Meeting for Sufferings**, and consisting of representatives of and Elders from all its constituent Meetings) established an **East-West Relations Committee**. This Committee was set up with the encouragement of American Friends and originated in a "concern" of the American Friends Service Committee that British Friends should co-operate with them in making a special study of the causes of East-West tension and should take what action seemed possible and useful in relieving that tension. A similar special committee of American Friends had existed for some time and had met periodically to study international affairs, as a result of which the booklet "**The United States and the Soviet Union**" had been published. This report, which received considerable attention in various parts of the world, has been recently followed by another called "**Steps to Peace: A Quaker View of U.S. Foreign Policy**." (Gollancz, London, 1951). This early initiative was followed up by the formation of an international Quaker team which was present in New York during the 1950-51 session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (and another which functioned similarly in Paris in 1951-52). This team of Quakers made personal and informal contact with representative statesmen of numerous countries, helped to provide a place where they could

be quiet and could get away from the limelight, and encouraged those who disagree and who distrust one another to meet on a more fundamental and friendly level.

It is in this field of personal relationships that the Society has always found its greatest opportunities for service. Friends had made such personal approaches to governmental leaders at various times in New York, Washington, London and elsewhere, and towards the end of 1950 British Friends felt strongly that they ought also to make a similar approach to leaders in the Soviet Union.

With the approval of the Meeting for Sufferings, therefore, a few members of the East-West Relations Committee visited the Soviet Embassy in London early in 1951 and asked for an invitation to send a delegation to the Soviet Union. In so doing they were careful not to deceive their hosts into supposing that Friends would be likely to give uncritical approval to all that they saw. They explained their hesitations with regard to the Partisans of Peace movement and to the documents put out by the **World Peace Council** (the executive body of that movement), and emphasised the fact that the Society had been unable to give it the support for which it had asked. They outlined the religious principles of Friends, and the way in which these have resulted in Friends' historic testimony for peace and against violence in all its forms, and presented to the Soviet Government, through the Counsellor at the Embassy, Quaker literature relating to the Peace Testimony and, in particular, the Message of Goodwill issued by the Society at its Yearly Meeting (the Annual General Meeting) in 1950, which had been published widely in English, French, German and Russian, and which is printed in the front of this book.

They said that the fundamental purpose of Friends in visiting the Soviet Union was to seek to demonstrate this goodwill to all whom they would meet in that country; they desired by their visits and personal contacts to contribute to a better reciprocal understanding of the way of life of the Soviet people and of the peoples of Britain and of the West; they wished to discuss with those whom they would meet, and particularly with political, religious and educational leaders (including representatives of the press) in the Soviet Union, the many obstacles to mutual understanding erected with varying degrees of responsibility by both sides, and the methods which Friends believe it is essential to use if peace is to be achieved.

All this was made clear in the initial meeting with the Soviet Counsellor at the Embassy in London, who agreed with great courtesy to forward the Society's request to his Government.

Shortly after this approach to the Soviet Embassy, however, an invitation came to the Society of Friends in Great Britain from the



World Peace Council, suggesting that a small number from both organisations should meet privately and informally to see if some basis for common action could be established. On the recommendation of the East-West Relations Committee this invitation was accepted, and the suggestion was made by Friends that the meeting should take place in England and that the Society of Friends should be the hosts.

Shortly before this the British Government had refused visas to representatives of the World Peace Council to attend the Sheffield Peace Conference, but Friends believed, and were correct in believing, that there would be no objection to the issue of visas for a private conference. The meeting actually took place at a country guest-house near Oxford and the party, which included two Russians and a Pole, were entertained to tea in the Friends' Meetinghouse in St. Giles, Oxford, and were shown some of the Colleges. The Conference only lasted over one week-end and our foreign guests were amused that on arrival at the airport in Great Britain, they were handed leaflets which said, "Welcome to Britain. Be sure to visit the Festival of Britain," although their visas were due to expire three days before the Festival opened! Friends thereupon suggested to the authorities that it would be gracious to extend the visas to allow time for a visit to the Festival, and this was done.

During these week-end discussions many problems were ventilated. The World Peace Council representatives were anxious to concentrate on points of agreement, but Friends thought it more profitable, in the limited time available, to discuss points of difference in order to see if any understanding or reconciliation of opposing views were possible. The conversations were extremely frank and yet conducted throughout in a friendly atmosphere; they were an interesting prelude to the discussions that Friends were to have later in the Soviet Union. During the meeting the senior Soviet delegate, Mr. Korneichouk (the Speaker of the Ukrainian Soviet and an eminent playwright) told the members of the East-West Relations Committee that he had been authorised to convey to them on behalf of the Soviet Peace Committee an invitation to send up to eight members of the Society of Friends to the Soviet Union at any time during the summer.

This invitation, which was received later in written form, was formally accepted by the Meeting for Sufferings at its next meeting and a committee was appointed to nominate the Friends who should go. Those finally selected were the following:

**B. Leslie Metcalf**, Chairman of the East-West Relations Committee and of the Industrial and Social Order Council of the Society of Friends. Chief Engineer of the National Coal Board.

**Gerald Bailey**, Secretary of the East-West Relations Committee, and for 19 years the Director of the National Peace Council. Member of the Friends' World Committee. Writer and politician.

**Margaret A. Backhouse**, until recently Chairman of the Friends' Service Council of Gt. Britain; member of the Friends' World Committee; formerly Warden of the Westhill Training College and Lecturer in Applied Psychology.

**Paul S. Cadbury**, Chairman of the Friends' Ambulance Unit, formerly a Liberal member of the Birmingham Town Council and Chairman of its House Building Committee. A managing director of Cadbury Bros. Ltd., Chocolate Manufacturers, Bournville, Birmingham.

**Mildred Creak**, physician to the Psychiatric Department of the Hospital for Sick Children, Gt. Ormond Street, London.

**Frank Edmead**, formerly a member of the Friends' Ambulance Unit. Reporter on the staff of the *Manchester Guardian*.

**Kathleen Lonsdale**, member of the Committees of two Friends' Schools in Great Britain and of the Friends' Conscriptioin Committee; of the Board of Visitors to Aylesbury Prison for Women and to the Borstal Institution for Girls. Head of the Department of Crystallography at University College, London. Fellow of the Royal Society.

Thus the delegation covered a wide range of professional interests and represented many aspects of Friends' service.

It was arranged that the Society should pay the fares of the delegation to and from Moscow, but Russian hospitality was gladly accepted within the boundaries of the Soviet Union. In order to meet the convenience of the members of the group the time of the visit was limited to the last two weeks in July 1951, and the Soviet visas and Czechoslovakian transit visas came through only the day previous to departure, so that most of the preliminary arrangements had to be made in faith.

Before leaving England, some members of the group were able to have conversations on separate occasions with Mr. Herbert Morrison, the then Foreign Secretary, and Mr. Kenneth Younger, the Minister of State, and to explain to them the general purposes of the visit. Although the visit was not in any sense officially sponsored, it was not discouraged and those who went were advised to take plenty of Quaker literature with them, advice which was listened to with some amusement, because Quaker literature is *not* "for export only."

A notice of the proposed visit appeared in the British Press at the end of June 1951, and was widely reported.

In the chapters that follow, the members of the group speak for themselves, much of the text being taken from diaries or letters written at the time of the visit or immediately following it, or from reports on different aspects of the visit.

## Chapter 2

### Introduction to Moscow

THE outward journey on Saturday, 14th July, 1951, was punctuated by the attentions of Press photographers (to whom we gradually became quite accustomed), by the good wishes of a group of Friends who came to see us off shortly after 7 a.m. at the air station, and by a warm welcome from Dutch Friends at Amsterdam, where we stayed for about an hour. We were travelling by a Dutch plane (no English air liners go to Czechoslovakia) and we were due to spend the night in Prague.

Because our plane was carrying more freight than passengers, we were diverted to Mulhouse, the airport for Basle on the French-Swiss frontier, and there we took on a cargo of penicillin. We thought this was propitious ballast for a goodwill mission, even when we discovered that Frank Edmead's raincoat had been buried beneath the cargo (not to be recovered until a fortnight later). We spent a most dilatory and unusually warm Saturday afternoon at Mulhouse, being at first uncertain which country we were in. No-one, not even the Dutch pilot, could say when we would proceed and we had a curious sensation of being, as it were, lost in Europe. As a result we were nearly five hours late at Prague airport.

There we were met by two members of the Czechoslovak Peace Committee: Dr. Suchomel Zoenek, from the Ministry for Church Affairs in Czechoslovakia, and Mr. Vysohlid Vaclav, who had been to Oxford University and who told us something of his personal experiences as a Czech for six years in German concentration camps. His fervent belief in the need for world communism arose directly from this experience and from a realisation, in 1938, that there was no certain safety in military alliances.

Their plans for our entertainment were upset by the late arrival, but after dinner at our hotel, the large cosmopolitan Hotel Alkron, luxurious but impersonal, we were shown round their lovely city until 11 o'clock. We saw "Good King Wencelas" dominating the



Wencelas Street, and St. George slaying the dragon in the Square outside the Cathedral of St. Vitus; we mixed with the people in a kind of cafeteria and admired the wonderful castle on the hill overlooking the old town. For a Saturday night, Prague struck us as being curiously quiet and uncrowded. We almost felt it to be depressed and unhappy, but perhaps it was we who were at fault. We had certainly had a rather unprofitable argument with our young Communist friend over dinner, and we determined that our future discussions should be undertaken in a different spirit.

Next day we had to get up early and at 7 a.m. we took off from Prague airport in a Russian plane for Moscow via Lvov and Kiev. None but Russian planes may enter the Soviet Union. That in which we travelled was comfortable, and seemed to be well-flown, but there were no safety-straps and no steward or "hostess," and fewer precautions were taken than in the West. At Lvov, the port of entry into the U.S.S.R., the plane came down quite near to workmen, dug-up ground and groups of people. This airport is small, with some of its buildings in ruins, but with evidence of much modernisation (as also at Kiev) as regards the airstrip and landing field. The sanitary arrangements were *not* modernised.

There was first a customs and money examination. Some of us had been a little nervous about this, our first experience of Soviet officials. We had been warned not to carry too many documents, as they might be extensively examined; and had been told also that we should not have with us modern English novels. The Russians disapprove of them. Dickens, we were told, would be quite safe; so would Shakespeare or H. G. Wells. In fact the Customs examination was quite cursory; many bags were not opened at all. Kathleen Lonsdale was asked to open one of her bags which contained papers. Near the top was Hans Andersen's "Fairy Tales" which she had brought for bedside reading. This caught the Customs official's eye; he beamed and said (in English) "Very good—very good indeed," and passed all the rest without further examination. It cheered us very much to find that a Soviet official could use his discretion in this way, and did. Leslie Metcalf's camera was also passed, and he was allowed to take all the photographs he wanted to, provided that they were processed before he left the Soviet Union.

The official who checked our currency was of rather a different type. He spoke no English and there were no interpreters there (this rather surprised us, because we had been led to expect that there would be interpreters everywhere to keep an eye on us). Two of our number, Leslie Metcalf and Frank Edmead, did know some Russian (twenty-five years previously Leslie had spent a year in Russia helping to erect one of their first great electric power-stations),

but they felt a little out of practice . . . at first. It was a very long time before this official had gone through all our small supply of money, taking down the number of every note and of every traveller's cheque, very slowly and painstakingly, with his tongue between his teeth. We were reminded by this that many elderly people in the Soviet Union must have received their education as adults, when it does not come so easily. As far as we know no use was ever made of the forms he filled in; we certainly never saw them again. Meanwhile the plane waited. We had a quick meal of eggs (three each were provided), with rich chocolate to drink, all at the expense of the British Embassy in Moscow, since as yet we had no roubles; and then went on to Kiev and Moscow.

It was a long tiring day, but we were interested in the countryside below, which was quite different from that of Western Europe. The Collective Farms were easy to spot. Large areas—500 acres, perhaps far larger—with a village in the middle and round the village the strips of personal land. We were also interested in our fellow-passengers. One young father, wearing the uniform of a Russian army captain, was distracted with anxiety for his small son of four, who was very miserable; his mother was even more so and could do nothing to help. Finally Paul Cadbury, himself an experienced grandfather, offered his raincoat as a pillow, and the little boy went to sleep on the floor, to his father's great joy and relief.

We arrived in Moscow on time (5.45 p.m. Moscow time, 3.45 p.m. English time, on Sunday, 15th July) and stepped out of the plane into blazing sunshine, to be greeted by some of our hosts from the Soviet Peace Committee, and three interpreters (two men and one woman) whom later we came to know very well. Formal welcome generally includes bouquets for the ladies, and those that we received were large bunches of sweet-smelling flowers, phlox, sweet william and cottage roses imbedded in ferns. We were interested to see, at a distance, the arrival of another delegation, much more picturesque than ours, of Church dignitaries in elaborate robes. We were told afterwards that they were from Hungary and had come for the special Ceremony of the Eastern Orthodox Church that we were later to witness at Zagorsk.

The road from the airport into Moscow was long, straight, hot and deserted; a wide tree-lined boulevard with a good surface. The only advertisements permitted along the roadside were in standard frames at regular intervals. The country was flat but not low-lying; the fields seemed to glow in that very brilliant sunshine. Patches of forest were frequent, and small wooden houses were dotted about. As we came nearer to the city we passed, at a distance, one of the most impressive buildings now being erected in or near



Moscow, the vast, scaffolded structure of the new University. Begun in 1949, it was now nearly completed. We were told that it would cover 160 hectares (390 acres). The aim is to make the University completely self-contained, with sufficient hostel accommodation for 6,000 students, each having a furnished room of his own of about eight square yards floor area, and with furnished flats for the University staff and their families. As well as the usual University buildings, there will be a theatre, an observatory and a stadium for 2,500 people.

As soon as we reached the outskirts of the town there was the usual clutter of buses and trams, old houses and new apartment blocks. The contrast between the old, tumbledown and overcrowded single houses of the last century and the new ferro-concrete blocks of flats was striking: so also was that between the old, cobbled narrow streets and the new wide thoroughfares in the centre of Moscow. The Hotel National, where we and several other delegations were housed, is in Revolution Square, adjoining the Red Square. Each of us had a sitting-room, bedroom and bathroom, luxuriously furnished in a rather old-fashioned style. From some of our rooms we could get a perfect view of the extraordinary Church of St. Basil in the distance—a thrilling glimpse in the evening sunlight—standing between the many-towered Kremlin on one side, with its dominant red stars, and the History Museum on the other. Beyond the History Museum was a modern department store.\*

After dinner in the hotel there was a meeting in Leslie Metcalf's sitting-room with the members of the reception committee, who wanted to know what kind of a programme to fix up for us: whom we wanted to see, where we wanted to go, what we wanted to do? It is often assumed that all delegations to the Soviet Union are simply taken on a conducted tour. Public opinion generally has tended to echo Edward Crankshaw's scepticism concerning the value of such delegations or their power to make objective observations:

"Anyone who is invited, apparently in all innocence, to go on one of these conducted tours should first ask himself why he is allowed into Russia when his neighbour is not. Next, before he commits himself, he should familiarise himself with Russian ways, and then ask himself whether he is likely to be proof against the whole apparatus of the Soviet State putting on a show, as only Russia can put on a show, for the express purpose of taking him in—as so many good and intelligent men and women have been taken in before him."

Our visit was certainly not of this kind. Before we left England we had made two requests in a letter to Mr. Tikhonov, the Chairman

\*See photograph, page 68

of the Soviet Peace Committee; one was that we should be offered only soft drinks, and the other that we should be allowed time to ourselves as we did not wish to be fully occupied for every hour of the day. These requests were loyally respected, and the six interpreters who were attached to our delegation were also total abstainers for the duration of our visit. We had our quiet times for discussion and every day tried to have half-an-hour's meeting for worship together.

Certainly no programme had been arranged for us in advance and almost every request that we made was acceded to. Not quite all: we asked if we might see Mr. Stalin, but that did not prove possible. As alternatives we named Mr. Gromyko, Mr. Vyshinsky or Mr. Malik; and we did eventually have a three-and-a-half hour interview with Mr. Malik, which is described in another chapter.

We were anxious to find out something about the position of religion in the Soviet Union to-day, and so we asked to be allowed to talk to the leaders of the Baptist and of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and to attend services if possible.

We wanted to discuss not only with political and religious leaders, but also with representatives of the Soviet Press and with our hosts, the Soviet Peace Committee, the methods which Friends believe it is essential to use if peace is to be achieved.

We wanted to meet educationalists and to learn something of the way in which Soviet children are taught. Unfortunately the end of July is the wrong time of year in which to see Soviet schools at work; the children were on holiday, as they would be in Western countries; but we were offered an interview with the Minister for Public Enlightenment (Education) of the Russian Federal Republic, Mr. Kairov.

Looking back, we are almost astonished at our own impudence. It was as if a party of Russians, representing some small religious sect, should come to England and ask to see the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Editor of the *Times*, the Minister of Education and a whole host of lesser individuals. Yet, in the main, we got what we asked for. Some of us had individual requests to make: Leslie Metcalf wanted to go down a coal-mine; Paul Cadbury wanted to see a chocolate factory; Kathleen Lonsdale wanted to visit crystallographers, to talk to the officials of the Academy of Science in Moscow, and to see a prison camp. All these were arranged.

We asked also that we should be allowed to visit some towns other than Moscow, and for one week-end, therefore, we divided:

three of us went by train to Leningrad, four by air to Kiev. We found afterwards that some visitors to the Soviet Union had gone much further afield: to Stalingrad, to the Black Sea and even to towns of Kazakhstan, 20 hours flying journey to the East. Some of us were asked if we could not increase the length of our visit in order to do this, but this was not possible.

We were, of course, anxious to see what we could of the people of Russia going about their ordinary business, to see something of their city, of their amusements and of their amenities and we therefore gladly accepted our hosts' advice as to the best way in which this could be done. To this extent, perhaps, we were agreeable to being "conducted" around. But we also had plenty of opportunity for going about by ourselves if we wanted to. This we, quite frankly, did not expect; but Quakers are essentially nonconformists and are not easily reconciled to being watched or followed. Kathleen Lonsdale relates her own experience as follows:

"I got up early one morning at the beginning of our visit, and went out of the Hotel at 7.30 a.m. in order to go for a walk, alone if possible. The usual policeman was standing in front of the Hotel and my heart was in my mouth. I thought it was quite possible that I should be stopped: perhaps even arrested. I was not sure that the rest of the group would approve of what I was doing: so I had not told them of my intentions. The policeman seemed to be taking no interest in me as I walked down the road and then turned the corner. A group of Russians were reading a wall newspaper, but they took no notice of me either, and when, after making a circuit of perhaps two miles, I came back to breakfast at half-past eight, I was not sure whether to be pleased or disconcerted at having found that I was much too unimportant to have been followed. Then I learned that two other members of our group, Gerald Bailey and Leslie Metcalf, had ventured out the previous evening on the same errand; and I was ashamed at having been so much afraid. It showed how much my suspicion had conditioned me."

After that the men Friends usually made a practice of walking back to the Hotel alone (that is, without the interpreters) after our evening Conferences, and the women Friends took various opportunities for wandering alone along the streets and through Stores during the daytime, noting the prices of goods and the appearance of the people buying them.

Our interpreters were an interesting group and we became very fond of them by the time we left. There was Sorokin, the senior, with whom several of us had most interesting conversations; Nekrasov, who had accompanied Mr. Korniechouk to England for

the conference between Friends and the World Peace Council, and whom some of us therefore had met before; he was studying history at Moscow University; Irena Nelidova, who is married and has two sons; she was a lecturer in linguistics at the University and told us that she was doing this interpreting for the Peace Committee voluntarily as a piece of social work; Dmitri Emolenko, whom some of us thought to be a rather remote figure at first, but who turned out to be very friendly and obliging; Grigoriev, an interesting red-haired youth; and Chardandsev, who is one of the assistant secretaries of the Soviet Peace Committee and made most of our arrangements for us. They all translated for us most competently and faithfully, and as far as Frank Edmead and Leslie Metcalf could tell from their knowledge of the language never altered in any way the emphasis or meaning of what we were trying to say. We were humiliated to realise that before we came we had had some suspicion that they might not be so honest as in fact they were. They were always anxious to help and no request of ours seemed to be too much trouble. They were tough nuts in argument and had all the answers as to why the Soviet Government does things the way it does, and we never heard them express any dissatisfaction with the *status quo*. Nevertheless they listened patiently to our arguments and never responded violently. We on our part were completely frank with them. We discussed all our activities with them and tried not to hide anything from them, not even our opinions.



## Chapter 3

### The First Two Days

AFTER dinner on Sunday evening we walked through the Red Square, round the outside of the Kremlin and down to the River Moscow with our interpreters. There we saw a pleasure steamer filled with families, as it might be on the River Thames, moving slowly upstream. On the far side there were a few bathers, enjoying the heat wave. The centre of Moscow on Sunday night is lovely. Paul Cadbury wrote in his diary: "The pavements, the riverside and the park strips outside the Kremlin walls were pleasantly filled with folk—all tidy and all looking very contented. The young people looked very 'grammar school'. It is quite possible that in this great city the apartments within walking distance of the centre are for the higher-paid people, but in any case the appearance of our Russian friends is very attractive."

We were later picked up by cars and taken for a drive to see a little more of Moscow and its five million inhabitants. Overcrowded slum dwellings were pointed out to us, and indeed they could not have been hidden; Moscow is full of them except where rebuilding has taken place.

Next morning (16th July) we woke up to a temperature of 92 deg. F., the highest, we were told, for many years. Our breakfast consisted of yoghurt, bread (black or white) and butter, cheese and cold sausage. Then huge omelettes for those who wanted them, and after that Russian tea or coffee and large teacakes like those eaten in Yorkshire. This, followed by a short Meeting for Worship, was to give us strength, both physical and spiritual, for a long and tiring day!

The whole morning was taken up with the filling in of some simple forms in the Hotel service bureau followed by a walk to the photographers where two plates were exposed of each of us. These were for our internal passports, only used in going from one town to another in our case, since we never needed them otherwise. Our

external passports were kept for us by the Hotel service bureau (as in some other European countries) and only handed back when we wanted to leave Moscow.

We found the photographer's shop already filled with an Austrian delegation of anti-fascist women from Vienna, and the hot and perspiring photographer who was trying to please everybody looked very much like a character out of a novel by Turgeniev. While we were waiting for our turn we went and sat in a pleasant garden café out of the heat.

Then we motored to the offices of the Soviet Peace Committee in Kropotkin Street, where we met some ten of their members, headed by Mr. Tikhonov. We sat round a table laden with rich cakes, apricots, chocolates and fruit juice. Later, Russian tea was served. Our conference, informal and formal, lasted until 4.30, the interpreters being strategically placed where they could be most helpful; some of our hosts, however, spoke English, and occasionally we used French or German to help ourselves out. All formal speeches were made a few sentences at a time, and then translated; it had the disadvantage of sometimes breaking the thread of an argument, but the merit of allowing time for thought. This was the pattern that was followed almost everywhere in our subsequent conferences.

The Soviet Peace Committee provided an influential cross-section of Russian political, religious and cultural life. There were present, in fact, a number of the people whom we had hoped to meet, and whom we did meet again later. There was the Metropolitan Nikolai, the head of the Orthodox Church in Moscow; Academician Grekov, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber of Nationalities; Mr. Zhidkov and Mr. Karov, President and Treasurer of the Russian Baptist Union; Professor Morozov\*, a Shakespearean scholar, who was editor of *News* (an English-language fortnightly magazine then just begun); Engineer Davydov, a famous specialist on irrigation; Academician Ivanov, Professor of International Studies at Moscow University; and several other men and women holding academic posts.

After short, polite, official speeches by Mr. Tikhonov, the Chairman, and Leslie Metcalf, there was a time for informal conversation. Paul Cadbury, for example, found that Professor Ivanov, who had spent six months in England and about the same period in Canada since the war, had read the American Friends' publication on "The United States and the Soviet Union" and had some understanding of Friends' point of view. The Baptist ministers asked questions about conditions in Great Britain and were interested to know whether the contrast between the East End and the West End of London still persisted.

\*We have been very sorry to hear of Professor Morozov's recent death.



After an hour or so we became formal again. Kathleen Lonsdale gave a statement of Quaker principles similar to that outlined in the Introductory chapter, followed by an account of the way in which Friends have attempted to put their principles into practice, particularly in relation to peacemaking and social service. Gerald Bailey followed with seven practical suggestions (later to be presented to the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Malik) for the improvement of present international relations. These speeches were followed by replies from our Soviet hosts, which were interesting not only in giving us the Soviet reaction to Quaker pacifist principles, but in showing us also how little they understood them or us.

Academician Grekov started the discussion by quoting the Old Testament to prove that God was not for non-resistance to evil: God had annihilated whole peoples. This seemed a curious argument from a man who was certainly a Marxist; and some of us would like to have told him a little of Friends' approach to Old Testament history and legend, if there had been time. He added that although he could not accept Quaker principles, the important thing was that the Quakers and the Peace Committee were travelling the same road: they both wanted peace.

Professor Morozov spoke next and told us that he accepted our statements as showing goodwill, and he wanted us to see that Russia has much goodwill towards the West. We must not forget, however, that Russia had recently been invaded by Hitler; the Russian people still felt this very bitterly. The Russian people were engaged in creative work, for example the building of their new Moscow University, and they appreciated British culture; but they knew that Britain was rearming, and re-armament leads to suspicion. He wanted us to go back to Britain and say that the Soviet people are a peaceful nation, and that they want peace in order to follow a programme of reconstruction.

We felt much sympathy with him and also with the next speaker, Engineer Davydov, who said that he was working with nature to save humanity: his task was to use the natural resources of the country to serve the people. They were making forest belts to protect their fields from wind erosion; building hydro-electric stations which would have an aggregate annual capacity of about 23 thousand million units of electricity (kwh.), to harness the waters of the Volga, the Don and other rivers. They were planning to irrigate some 28 million hectares of desert, to turn it into agricultural land and to enable their people to live under better conditions. All this work, he emphasised, was peaceful in its intent and needed peace for its accomplishment. Engineer Davydov was the son of a smith and was brought up in the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. He graduated from a University in Central Asia and is in charge of the

work of which he spoke, which he has recently described more fully in an article in *News* (September 1951, p.17).

Professor Dinnik, who spoke next, had little to say except that it was possible for an atheist, such as himself, and the Metropolitan Nikolai to work together for peace, although their philosophies were quite different.

A woman lecturer at the University, who followed him, urged that it would be wrong for us to force our methods on each other, since our aims were one. We should discuss those points on which we could agree rather than those which divided us. (There was no doubt about the latter; her look of disgust when we first spoke of our Christian fundamentals had perhaps been more obvious than she realised). She added that in the U.S.S.R. war propaganda was criminal. (We were to hear more about this in a later conference with Professor Grekov). Figures for state expenditure were available and we could examine the budget for ourselves and see how and where the money was being spent. We could join in the struggle to restrict the war in Korea and Indo-China, and to see that it did not spread. Meanwhile personal acquaintance would help mutual understanding.

After a few words from the Metropolitan Nikolai referring to the conversations he hoped to have with us later, the President of the Baptist Union got up. He was a sincere little man with a neatly trimmed goatee beard. He agreed that we must find an alternative to fighting and said that the Baptists believed in love, but that God also used force. The New Testament spoke of man having a sword and he had cause to have one. The time would come when swords could be beaten into plough-shares, but that would be when God had chained evil. It was impossible to be reconciled with bandits; if a bandit attacked your children you must be prepared to defend them. (This, of course, is precisely the argument we often meet from Church leaders at home. The difference is, as we were able to explain later, that they regard the Soviet government as the bandits, whereas our Soviet friends clearly regarded the British and American governments in that light!) He went on to say that there were over 200 million people in Russia not one of whom was for war, but some Baptists, Congregationalists and Methodists abroad wanted war. Truman and Bevin, he said, were Baptists. "I hope our dear guests will help to draw all sections of the Christian Community into the fight for peace. If you can get the Baptist Truman into that path we will be grateful."

Final speeches from Academician Ivanov and Mr. Tikhonov underlined the friendship between the Soviet and British people and pleaded for mutual respect of one another's philosophies and for

unity in the defence of peace. We explained in an informal way, as the meeting broke up, that Friends do believe in opposing evil, but that they believe in opposing it with good; and that rather than defending peace, we believe in creating it or rather in creating an atmosphere in which peace and goodwill can flourish naturally.

From Kropotkin Street we were taken in motor-cars to Tolstoy's Moscow house. On the way, only a short distance, we had ample evidence of the great strength and resilience of Russian automobile springs, for the route lay through some very rough and bumpy cobbled back streets, past old houses which are overcrowded and dilapidated. Tolstoy's house is now kept as a museum, and we had to put on soft cloth overshoes, which were provided, so that we did not dirty or scratch the polished floors. It is in almost exactly the same condition as when Tolstoy left it, with the table set for dinner in the dining room, with place names to show where each member of the family used to sit. We saw the desk at which Tolstoy wrote some of "War and Peace," his bicycle (a very early model) and the grand piano on which most of the famous musicians contemporary with him had played. Leslie Metcalf wrote at the time: "We were shown round by a charming old woman who must have had some connection with the family, as she spoke with such affection about them. She was a pleasure to listen to as she spoke Russian so delightfully and it is a beautiful language when spoken like that."

At dinner that evening we found that a visit to the Tolstoy estate some three hours' motor journey from Moscow, had been arranged for 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the next day, but we decided against this because we did not wish our time to be so completely filled in this way with what would be mainly sight-seeing, although we were told that it would include a visit to a collective farm.

After dinner we all went to the British Embassy and were cordially received by the Ambassador, Sir David Kelly, who had already heard from Mr. Herbert Morrison that we would be in Moscow. It was interesting to step into an oasis of Victorian décor with full-length portraits of Queen Victoria, King Edward VII and so on. We went through to the back porch of the Embassy as it was still very warm, and we had a free and friendly talk with Sir David, who understood our position and that we should speak our minds frankly as we felt it right to do so. Our interpreters, of course, did not accompany us on this visit.

The following morning (Tuesday, 17th July) after a quiet half-hour together, when we tried to prepare ourselves in spirit for the worship that we were to have later with our Baptist friends, we went for a motor drive in Moscow to see some of the new buildings. There are many huge blocks of flats, some being erected and some already completed and occupied. We never could get a very satisfactory

answer as to the method of allocation: we were always told that it was according to need. As we really wanted to find out whether Party members had priority, this was not very satisfactory, but we had to remind ourselves that we should find it a little difficult to explain in detail to strangers the rules of allocation of Council houses in Great Britain; or to justify allocation according to means in the case of houses built by private enterprise.

Leslie Metcalf wrote of this morning drive: "Moscow is becoming a lovely city and the Russians are extraordinarily proud of it and rightly so. My memory of it 25 years ago is hazy, but the new Moscow is in most ways unrecognisable and yet the Kremlin, the Pineapple Church and the Moscow River are still there and much else of the old Moscow too." Two significant differences that he did notice were the absence of the picturesque one-horse Droshkys and also the absence of flies in modern Moscow even in the hot weather we were having. The streets were washed early every morning by large machines.

A word about transport may be of interest. Everywhere we went we were taken in two or three motor-cars, one at least of which would be a Zis (which stands for "The Factory named after Stalin"). These cars look like the large pre-war Packards. Another motor-car factory named after Molotov turns out a smaller car called the Victory car. They are all solidly built and well finished. The roads in the centre of Moscow are excellent and so wide that it is really an undertaking to cross them as there are no islands in the middle, only a "neutral zone". There are traffic lights, controlled by policemen, and policemen man the road crossings even where there are lights. Traffic runs on the right side of the roads and turning directly left at a crossing is forbidden. Cars that wish to turn left must go straight across first, circle round a policeman standing in the middle of the road some 100 yards up and then proceed back to the crossing where they are now in a position to turn right. People can be fined on the spot if they cross elsewhere than at a proper pedestrian crossing in certain parts of the city and Mildred Creak was surprised, and somewhat alarmed, at being peremptorily whistled back to the pavement by a policeman when, on a solitary walk, she was crossing an empty street diagonally. Kathleen Lonsdale noticed, however, at one busy crossing that some Soviet citizens were much less law-abiding than she was and did not always wait for the correct traffic signal in order to cross.

During this morning's drive and also on the next day we were followed everywhere by Press photographers (Leslie Metcalf also took some photographs), as a note of our visit had appeared in the morning papers.\*

\*See photographs, page 68



Later in the morning we were taken to the Dynamo Football Stadium, outside of which a small crowd of men and boys were studying some kind of score board. While the men Friends went in to look at the enormous interior, the women went across to where another small crowd were buying iced, coloured drinks from a barrow on the street and, with some qualms, joined with them. It was still very hot.

Then we all went to look at the Dynamo Underground Station, and later, at the Station of the Square of the Revolution, we met one of the Chief Engineers of the famous "Moscow Metro" and were escorted by train through several stations, alighting and inspecting each one thoroughly. Every station is a work of art; the marbles and stone employed and the artistic lighting give a striking effect. Electric brushing and washing machines are provided to keep the floors clean and everywhere is spotless. The equipment for the trains was, we understand, supplied by Metrovick and the trains are not unlike those of London's Underground. At each end of each platform stands a militia man, apparently to prevent people from getting on to the line by mistake. The girls who usher the trains in and out are exceedingly smart. There is also a girl at the end of each escalator to see that people get on and off without difficulty and at least one station the arm-rail of the escalator had been synchronised to travel at the same rate as the stairs! There is a fixed charge for a ride of any distance. One sensible idea, that might well be copied elsewhere, is that the front compartment of every Metro train is reserved for children, alone or with their parents, for pregnant women and for disabled people, who are thus sure of a seat out of the press of the crowd. Every station is provided with a small first-aid post and with a nurse in a spotless, white uniform.

The Metro impressed us all, though not all alike. Paul Cadbury wrote in his diary: "At first sight, the lavish scale and decoration of the Underground—which in the main is very beautiful—is an anachronism when we feel that on the surface men, women and children are living in overcrowded houses. I was reminded that almost every beautiful building in the world was built at times when a similar situation existed." Mildred Creak wrote: "It seemed to me to have been conceived as an act of worship; after the hell of destruction and despair there must have come a time when all the skill and craftsmanship available went to create something lovely... The people of Moscow have every reason to be proud of it... As we were being shown round we often became the centre of a group of people who would tack on to our edges, not to gape at us, but to listen to the words of our guide."

After a late lunch we called (again of course without our interpreters) on Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the Indian Ambassador to

Russia, whom we had met on two occasions in London and from whom we had then had a cordial invitation to visit him in Moscow where he would be in the six summer months. He is a Fellow of All Souls' College, and Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford, where he used to spend the six winter months, visiting his Government in India at Christmas time to report. (Dr. Radhakrishnan has recently, however, been elected Vice-President of India). Just before we left England he had made a notable speech in Geneva in favour of the election of a Communist Chinese representative to UNESCO after the British had voted for the Chinese Nationalist.

We were greatly inspired by this visit. Dr. Radhakrishnan was so practical and so understanding, so optimistic about our effort and the rightness of our visit and our attitude; and he helped us to understand more about the people whom we had come to see, while continuing to deplore those things they do which we believe to be wrong.

Following this visit we returned to the Hotel, picked up our interpreters and set off for the Baptist Church (there is only one in Moscow) to meet some of the Baptist ministers at 6 p.m. and to take part an hour later in their regular Tuesday evening service.

## Chapter 4

### Visits to Churches

THE evening we spent at the invitation of the Baptist leaders in their Moscow Church provided one of the most memorable experiences of our visit. When we arrived at 6 p.m. the church was already beginning to fill up.

We assembled first of all in the small vestry attached to the church, where we were welcomed with great warmth and sincerity and then had an hour's conversation ranging over such questions as pacifism, the Doukhobors who, with the help of Count Tolstoy and of American and Canadian Quakers, found the religious freedom they desired in Canada some 53 years ago, and so on. They told us something of the organisation of their church and of the successive fusions that have created the movement of Baptist-Evangelicals as it is to-day. One of these fusions had absorbed most of the large religious community holding views and practices similar to those of Friends, of which we had heard as existing in Russia during the nineteenth century. We had noticed that at our first meeting with the Peace Committee the Baptist representatives had vigorously countered our own pacifist declarations, and we were now told that the traditional pacifism of one section of their Church had been abandoned some few years after the Soviet Revolution.

On this occasion and in later meetings with the Baptist leaders we gathered some information about their movement as it is to-day. There are 4,000 Baptist Churches, we were told, in the Soviet Union, the largest of which is in Kiev. The Baptist-Evangelicals probably form the strongest Protestant religious group in the Soviet Union. The whole Church then had some 400,000 members and about 3,000,000 adherents or attenders. There are no Sunday Schools and no religious education of the young is undertaken by the Church except through the Church services they attend. Our hosts said that it was the duty of parents to give religious instruction to their children in the home, and that separate organisations for young people tended to divide the Church. We felt that this was their

rationalisation of a situation over which they had no control. Religious education of the young *except* in the home or through the regular church service is forbidden by law (see Appendix II); and there was no attempt to conceal this fact.

We learnt also that there is no paid ministry; those whom we met were lay preachers. Nor is there any machinery for the re-election of Church officers, who apparently therefore hold office indefinitely. As for the Moscow church itself, this has 4,000 members and many more attenders, but the church only seats 1,500 and therefore five services are held weekly. These, we were told, are invariably fully attended, as many as 2,000 people crowding into the church on Sundays. We asked how many had applied for baptism and Church membership during the first six months of 1951 and were told that the number was over 350, about one-third being young people. Rather less than half had been accepted and the rest were awaiting visitation.

During this conversation, Mr. Zhidkov, the President of the Baptist Union, whom we had met the previous day, said that he hoped that one of us would say a few words during the service that was about to take place, and this duty fell on Leslie Metcalf.

Soon after 7 o'clock we filed into the church, where the service had already begun. Every one of the 1,500 seats was taken and by the end 300 or so were standing, in the aisles, up the stairways into the galleries and round the back. The majority were women, mostly elderly, but perhaps a fifth of those present were young to middle-aged and about the same proportion were men. We were told that many regular members were on night work and could not come except on Sundays. It has sometimes been suggested that the church was packed, by order of the authorities, in order to impress us. If so, it was done very unintelligently. We should have been more impressed by a younger and more representative congregation. Lady Kelly, in some recent articles in the London evening paper, *The Star*, herself comments on the packed churches in the Soviet Union to-day, an observation covering a period of years as the wife of the British Ambassador in Moscow.

The service was very simple and deeply devotional: prayers and addresses were interspersed with communal singing of well-known hymns, of which some of us could recognise the tunes, and with three anthems from a well-trained choir. It was very definitely not a show, but a deeply moving religious service. We were seated on the pulpit platform, and being able to see the rapt expression of many of the older members of the congregation we could realise what it must mean to them to be able to worship freely now after years of persecution.



After a time Leslie Metcalf took the lectern and spoke for about ten minutes in Russian, with the senior interpreter standing beside him to prompt him when he stumbled over the pronunciation of a word. There was, of course, no attempt to restrict or censor his freedom of speech. This is the substance of what he said :

"We are happy to be in the Soviet Union. We are very grateful for the invitation which the Soviet Peace Committee has been good enough to extend to us and for the cordiality of your welcome. The Society of Friends to which we all belong attaches the greatest importance to direct and personal contact between peoples, and we rejoice in this opportunity to come into a personal relationship with you and your fellow-countrymen. We have one major and overriding purpose in coming, and that is to strengthen, by however little or by however much, the prospect of achieving true peace and co-operation between all the nations of the world, and not least between our country and the Soviet Union. In pursuit of this we wish to discuss with your church officers in all friendliness and frankness the problems which mutually face us in removing the threat of war and in consolidating a genuine peace. We are confident that our visit will greatly extend our knowledge and understanding of the Soviet Union and of the Russian people as we hope it will strengthen your knowledge and understanding of our country. Again from our hearts we thank you for your generous welcome."

He then read the Message of Goodwill to All Men which British Friends had published in English, French, German and Russian the previous year (printed in the front of this book) and followed this by reading from the Russian Bible on the lectern a few verses from the letter to the Ephesians (Chapter 3, 14-21). He ended by making a reference to the text "God is Love" on the church window behind us, and finally asked that all might stand for a few moments of silence, Sorokin explaining to the congregation that silence played an important part in Quaker worship. Paul Cadbury wrote in his diary that night: "Never before, and perhaps never again, shall I experience so close a realisation of the presence of the living God. This was a moment that must leave an impression on all of us."

The service closed with the Russian version of the hymn "God be with you till we meet again," sung to the familiar tune in which we could join, and while singing this all the women in the congregation took out their handkerchiefs and waved them to us. After the benediction some of the little children were still waving and we felt that we must go down among them. Friends are not usually very emotional, but the Russian people are ; and as they wrung our hands and kissed us some of us felt very unworthy and near to tears. Many of them, as they embraced us, said just one word "Mir"—the

Russian word for "Peace"—and said it with such sincerity that it would have been impossible to suppose that these people were playing a part, or that they had been dragooned into signing the peace petitions, as we had sometimes been told in Western papers. To them, at least, it was genuine and they welcomed us both because of our religion and because we had come in the name of peace. We made our way with difficulty from their midst, feeling shaken and deeply moved.

After the congregation had finally dispersed we returned to the church and took supper with the ministers at a table placed on the pulpit platform. As is the way with voluntary church workers the world over, the ladies of the church had prepared a remarkably fine meal. There were enormous bowls of large-sized strawberries, cream, rich cake, strawberry jam eaten with a spoon out of little glass dishes as an accompaniment to tea with lemon in the usual Russian way, and some excellent chocolates. Emotion sharpens the appetite, and we did justice to their hospitality. After supper the President read to us the various peace messages which from time to time they had sent to their brother Baptists in England and elsewhere, including an appeal to the Baptists all over the world to express their categorical protest against "the aggression of the United States in Korea" and calling on all Churches to preach peace and on all believers to pray sincerely for peace, and to support the movement of the "Defenders of Peace." They complained wistfully, though without bitterness, that they had received little or no response from British and American Baptists.

After this there was a pause in which Gerald and Leslie had a hurried private talk : if we let this go by default we should be failing in our duty ; and yet it would be ungracious to be churlish after the Service, the supper and their generous welcome. However, on the basis of speaking the truth in love, it was decided that we must reply frankly and Gerald Bailey did so. He said that it would seem to those who received such messages that any religious body or peace movement which identified itself with the political aims of one side only in a dispute could not work sincerely for peace. He said that it was this adherence of the "Defenders (or Partisans) of Peace" to the policies of the Soviet Government and the tacit assumption that all who held a different view were aggressors, that made it so difficult for the Quakers to support it. Why did they not, he asked, seek to make contact with their fellow-Baptists in the West on the basis of their underlying spiritual unity, laying aside for this purpose the polemical or, at best, controversial declarations of the political "peace movements" ? This seemed to bewilder them : there was an awkward silence. Then the President said, almost pathetically, that they knew very little about politics : believing in deeds was their guide in working for peace. We were convinced that their concern

for peace was as genuine as our own and that their desire to know true fellowship with their Baptist colleagues in other countries was deeply felt. Our explanations and questions helped them to understand better the difficulties facing their fellow-Christians in the West, where the lack of co-operation between the Churches of East and West is also a matter of deep concern. (We are glad that our visit has led to some correspondence between the Baptist Union in Great Britain and the Russian Baptist-Evangelicals).

After the supper party we were invited once more into the vestry, where we were all presented with lacquer boxes of different shapes, with a painting of the Kremlin on the lid—the work of artists associated with the notable group of craftsmen in the village of Palekh. The women Friends in our group also received bouquets from the ladies of the church. So ended a memorable occasion.

On Wednesday, 18th July, we were up early, and having met together for a quarter-of-an-hour at 7.15, we set off in three cars at 8.0 for the famous Troitsky monastery, founded in the 15th century by St. Sergius at Zagorsk, about 50 miles from Moscow. There was a good deal of traffic on the road. We learned that excursion trains were running out from Moscow to bring those who wished to come to the Annual Festival of St. Sergius and when we arrived at about 9.50 there was already a big crowd there, largely of peasant folk, and again mostly women: it was estimated that 30,000 people would attend the Festival including the men who were working in fields around and who would come later. It was another brilliant day and it was a wonderful sight to see all these people waiting for the procession of Patriarchs, Archbishops and other Church dignitaries against the background of eleven churches of very different sizes, all highly decorated and with many coloured domes.

We were led in single file into the Cathedral of the Assumption where, with difficulty, we made our way through the standing people (of whom there were over 5,000 inside the Church, packed tightly side by side) to a small panelled box or choir-stall on the right of the ikon screen. From here we could get a good view of the clergy who were swinging censers, singing chants and following the course of a highly ritualistic liturgy. The quiet of a Friends' Meeting is no training for this kind of worship and it was difficult for us as visitors to enter fully into unity with the worshippers, many of whom were prepared to stand there for the full three hours (there are no seats in an Orthodox Church). The people near the doors were going in and out, and as they came in they would buy a candle or two, and pass them up from one to another to the front of the church to be lit and put on one of the stands. They were also passing money from hand to hand up to the clergy. We would see some peasant woman tap the one in front of her on the shoulder and hand her

some money, and this would in turn be passed on to the next person and so on until it reached a priest or a monk. When the clergy or choir sang chants the congregation did not join in, but just below us there was one white-haired old woman who sang continually, much to the annoyance of those around her, who nudged her and pushed her to try to make her stop, but without any effect. As Leslie Metcalf, who is rather tall, was watching this from the choir-stall he found that he was being asked to exercise his authority to silence her, but he became engrossed in something else!

The gorgeous vestments of the officiating clergy, who included the Patriarchs of All-Russia, of Georgia, of Roumania and of Bulgaria, contrasted with the simple garments and white head-scarves of the women, who stood reverently and patiently responding to the liturgical chants or, if they had room, bowing themselves to the ground, and continually passing their bundles of candles from hand to hand to the acolytes in front. The church was lit in the front by large tapers and one man was going round from one taper to another with a little stool on which he had to stand in order to trim the wicks. He had a fancy embroidered coat over his peasant's smock: the Russian novelists have drawn, in their short stories, vivid pictures of such types.

After an hour we left the Cathedral; we had inevitably been spectators at, rather than participants in, this act of worship, but we could not fail to appreciate the beauty of the unaccompanied singing and the fact that such an immense gathering of believers was taking place in the heart of the militantly atheistic Soviet Union.

We had been invited to lunch in the seminary, or ecclesiastical college, where priests are trained for the ministry. We were greeted by the principal and his staff in a room whose ceiling depicted in embossed pictures, looking like large pieces of Wedgwood China, events in the life of Peter the Great. Lunch was set out at little tables and we had a leisurely and restful meal. Here we met the philologist-biologist who recalled with pleasure his time at Trinity College, Cambridge, some forty years ago and who sought news of present-day life and events in Britain. Here we debated in friendly fashion whether Orthodoxy or Quakerism more nearly reflected "primitive" Christianity. Here we talked of the steady inflow of young men into the priesthood, many of them coming from families traditionally linked with the Orthodox Church. That the Church could and did attract the young devotee we saw for ourselves when we met in the monastic buildings or in one or other of the Churches monks of immature age with beards of very recent growth. We were told that the supply of young men who wished to enter the priesthood (where there is no rule of celibacy) exceeded the demand by about two-fold, but that there were not enough who wished to be



monks, from whose ranks the higher offices in the Church must eventually be filled.

After lunch we went into one of the smaller Churches, which was also crowded, with a queue waiting outside to come in as soon as they could. The priest who was officiating was gradually collecting a pile of paper money on the altar and neither he nor his congregation took any notice of us as, to our embarrassment, we were given a short lecture by our monk guide on some ancient ikons. The ikons and the frescoes of the monastery churches are being restored with the utmost skill and care as part of a general restoration of historical monuments, secular and religious, to which the Soviet Government is obviously devoting expert resources and considerable funds. Before we left Zagorsk we were shown the museum where the priceless treasures of the monastery and its past are assembled. We had seen on the outer walls cannon dating from the time when the monastery was, in effect, a military fort; it had proved impregnable when besieged by the Poles in the 17th century. We now saw delicate embroideries, jewelled crosses and robes and wonderfully fine filigree work and the whole was shown to us by an extremely capable woman curator who spoke excellent English and who turned out to be a lecturer in the seminary. Meanwhile a procession of the Patriarchs and other church officials had left the Cathedral and they passed through the grounds watched by an immense crowd kept in order by large numbers of police. We kept in the background and some of us were thus able to observe one illuminating though trifling incident. There was one little old woman who was determined to have a good view and she kept on bobbing in between the waiting people and coming up in front, where of course she spoilt the view for someone else who had been there longer. The police were very patient with her, although she really was very tiresome, and put her back several times quite gently. The relationship between the police and the crowd seemed good.

Again we had been photographed everywhere.\*

On the way back to Moscow we discussed all manner of things with our interpreters, with whom we were now on the friendliest of terms: the teaching of children to exercise their critical faculties, working mothers, religious education, living conditions in the U.S.A., political prisoners in the U.S.S.R., the dismissal of Monica Felton from her job for going to North Korea without official permission, and the right of Soviet citizens to criticise their government. We certainly discovered some major differences of outlook, but the plain speaking on each side left no ill feeling behind.

In the evening we went to the cinema. The Russians like their films to be serious and think that most American films are thoroughly

\*See photographs, page 67

decadent. They certainly enjoyed this one, which was called "The Cavalier of the Golden Star," and was about a young Russian who, on his return from the war to his collective farm, decided to build a hydro-electric power station and did so in spite of some opposition from the elderly and more conservative members of the community. The colour was extraordinarily good and there were some wonderful views of the Russian countryside, farms, fields and distant hills. We hear that they learned the technique from the German firm Agfa, whose process they adopted after the war. The small hall, fitted with hard chairs, was packed at the 8.30 p.m. performance and there were two-hour performances continually from 12.30 p.m. to 12.30 a.m. There were many such small cinemas in Moscow, including one at least showing stereoscopic films. We had tickets booked for this on several occasions, but were never able to go because conferences intervened which were more important from our point of view. Coming back to the "Cavalier of the Gold Star"; this provided an amusing illustration of the conscientiousness of our interpreters, one of whom was sitting next to Kathleen Lonsdale, translating continuously. There was a slight love interest in the story and the picture reached a point where absolutely no translation was necessary, but he continued faithfully to whisper into her ear "You are very dear to me," while she struggled hard not to laugh. The final scenes of the film, when the power generated by the hydro-electric station was switched on and the lights went on in one village after another, while all those who had made the enterprise a success gathered for a feast in honour of Stalin, were hailed with great enthusiasm by the audience but would have been altogether too naive, we felt, for our sophisticated Western audiences. Nevertheless we enjoyed the film immensely.

## Chapter 5

### End of the First Week

NEXT day (Thursday, 19th July) we had a morning off: wrote letters, filled in our diaries, prepared statements for future occasions or went for walks as we felt inclined. Moscow seemed to us to be poorly supplied with shops as compared with other cities of comparable size. There were a few large shops of the multi-store type and many smaller ones, including some "wagon-type" shops outside the big blocks of apartments in the newly-built areas. We were told that these were sent out by the big shops. The department stores were always crowded with people and long queues usually formed outside before the opening time, which was 11 a.m. The display counters and general arrangements inside seemed not very good, and on the whole the goods seemed mediocre in quality. In any case we had no money at first, for our hosts were reluctant to facilitate the exchange of travellers' cheques. They did not see why we need cash any cheques: if we said what we wanted they would buy it for us! However, Leslie Metcalf exerted a gentle but constant pressure and was eventually taken on Thursday morning to the bank, where he cashed some cheques and distributed a few roubles to each member. The rate of exchange was 11 roubles to the pound and at this rate everything appears to be frightfully expensive to the Englishman: a packet of postcards in the hotel lobby cost £1, for example. On the other hand, by the same standards, wages are also very high. Sir David Kelly, in an article in the *Sunday Times* (2nd Dec., 1951) has given 800 roubles per month as the average wage, and this is the figure we were given for the wage of an unskilled worker in the heavy industries or of a skilled worker in the light industries. By our official rate of exchange this would be nearly £900 per annum! Of course this is absurd.

Kathleen Lonsdale was particularly interested in the question of the cost of living and on Wednesday afternoon she had been delighted to find that staying in the same hotel with us were a distinguished Indian statistician, Professor Mahalanobis, F.R.S., and his wife, both of whom she knew personally. Professor Mahalanobis

is Director of the Statistical Institute in Delhi, Statistical Advisor to the Government of India and a United Nations expert. He had been in the Soviet Union for some weeks at the invitation of the Soviet Government, making a survey of standards of living for his own Government. He and his wife had flown across to towns of Kazakhstan and had seen something of the reconstruction of these Asian towns, where the problems were more like those of his own country. He had been able to compare costs of living and wages in different parts of the Soviet Union and had found, in fact, very little variation. On two or three occasions he and Kathleen Lonsdale were able to have long discussions on his experiences; she also made investigations of her own, wandering alone into shops and noting prices and quality of goods and the appearance of the people who were buying them, and enquiring about wages not only of our interpreters but also of the Baptist ministers and other people whom she felt to be knowledgeable and trustworthy. She came to the conclusion that a true rate of exchange based on comparative standards would be about 6d. a rouble, or 40 roubles to the £1. This rate put everything better into focus and lessened the discrepancies between both prices and wages in our different countries.

Of course, in a country which is partly agricultural and partly industrialised, with wide differences of income, it is difficult, if not actually misleading, to attempt to give an "average" wage. One must make a wage analysis. Similarly the "cost of living" should include food, clothes, rent, heating, etc., the cost of books, education and entertainment and an estimate of social services and of direct taxation. In the Soviet Union, for example, food, although now unrationed, is dear, except for bread and milk, but rents are very low. On the other hand, the amount of accommodation for the rent paid is also very small indeed. Taking all things together, the Russian working man is not yet as well off as his British opposite number but apart from housing conditions, which are still very poor, he is by no means so far behind as is sometimes supposed and it is quite certain that his condition is steadily improving.

We did some queer things in our investigations. Paul Cadbury stood at a street corner looking at the feet of 100 people as they passed by. All were wearing decent shoes. Some of our men Friends were bent on finding and inspecting a public lavatory, without having to ask where one was. Our experiences at the Russian airports had led us to expect the worst; but when they did find one, it was spotlessly clean; and free. We frequented new and second-hand bookshops (of which Moscow is full) and were interested to see how cheap were technological books (an excellent stiff-covered dictionary was six roubles—3s. by the true rate of exchange—and a variety of small paper-covered books giving the rudiments of various sciences were available at one rouble each) and how many young and



not-so-young people were buying them. We looked in toyshops to find out whether it was true, as we had been told, that there were no military toys for sale. It was not true, but there were very few. Toys were dear and not very good.

Gerald Bailey, Frank Edmead and Leslie Metcalf had lunch on this Thursday at the Hotel Metropole with the correspondents of *Reuters* and the *Sunday Times*, one American and the other British. The unbalanced rate of foreign exchange does operate very unfavourably against British visitors to or foreigners resident in Moscow, and the *Sunday Times* correspondent told us that his paper has to spend over £20,000 a year to keep him there. This is one of the reasons why we have so few newspaper correspondents in Moscow (others are given in Chapter 9), and this rate of exchange would in any case be a great barrier to free access for British tourists. At present all visitors to Russia are, almost without exception, members of delegations whose expenses are defrayed by one or other of the Government or semi-Government organisations who act as their hosts. It makes honest and constructive criticism by delegations more difficult, though not, of course, impossible!

In the afternoon four of us visited the Building Exhibition, which we thought was very well arranged. It has been open for the last twenty years and has been visited, we were told, by 20,000,000 people. There were many models of the buildings that we had seen actually going up, together with exhibits of the details of construction, the internal fittings, plumbing, etc. One of the new blocks of apartments that we saw in process of construction on the river front has 340 flats divided up into 764 living rooms. There will be 17 storeys, with a central tower going up to 25 storeys. Since Moscow is not built on rock these skyscrapers must be floated on concrete rafts. They are welded steel framed buildings with perforated bricks on the outside; the floors and walls are prefabricated in factories and hauled into position by immense derricks and they are being put up at an amazing rate. The Exhibition is very practical and aims at creating an intelligent interest in the building projects in the Soviet Union. It also portrays the progress in the development of electric power, steel production, mining, road making, the building of canals and so on. As Paul Cadbury wrote in the Visitors' Book, we wished that it were possible for English housing experts to visit this Exhibition and to see the construction going on in Moscow and elsewhere, and that their experts could visit us in return. We could both learn much from each other. When we said so, our interpreter laughed and said that although by now he had a high opinion of our powers, we would indeed be magicians if we could persuade the British Government to allow a party of Russian building experts to wander around England.

Meanwhile the other three Friends had spent the afternoon visiting the Museum of Stalin's 70th birthday presents. Mildred Creak wrote of it: "We saw Stalin painted in oils, done in feathers, in wood, in metal, in coal, in grains, and I daresay in as many different local materials as people could lay hands on. Every corner of the U.S.S.R., every man, woman and child seemed to have contributed to this large conglomeration of gifts. Among the most interesting were the national sections. The French communists sent a gift epitomising all the bitterness of communist resistance during the German occupation, the Viennese communists a suave set of beautifully made furniture, the British communists a rather sparse exhibit of one briar pipe and the Chinese a lovely outburst of red flags and lyricism which contrived to remain essentially and beautifully Chinese in feeling." The exhibition was still crowded every day.

On our return to the hotel we found a message from the Patriarch Alexius,\* head of the Orthodox Church in Russia, that he would receive us at 8.0 that evening. So at 7.55 we drove to his house and were immediately admitted. With him was the Metropolitan Nikolai, whom we had already met, and two other church dignitaries, one of whom made notes.

The Patriarch was in feature like a rather robust Rendel Harris, the one-time Director of Studies at Woodbrooke College, Birmingham, with the same shrewd twinkle in his eye that some of us remembered so well.

After a simple explanation by Leslie Metcalf of our Quaker purpose in coming to the Soviet Union, Gerald Bailey conveyed informally messages of Christian greeting from Western Church leaders and from the secretariat of the World Council of Churches. He spoke of the goodwill we were confident existed among the Western Churches toward the Russian Church and the eager desire of the Western Churches for the development of closer and more friendly relations. He appealed to the Patriarch to take some initiative toward bringing about a conference between leaders of the Russian Church and leaders of the Western Churches. In such a conference, if the more political and inevitably controversial approach could be avoided, they might together try to find means, again on the basis of their spiritual unity, of creating the more favourable atmosphere in which the statesmen could hope to reach worthwhile agreements.

The Patriarch in reply acknowledged our references to the World Council of Churches but ventured the—in the circumstances—somewhat surprising observation that the Council was too much involved in politics. As to the proposal for a conference of Church

\* See photograph, page 69

leaders he told us that he had to be careful not to overstep his own authority in these matters since it was the senior Patriarch in Constantinople who regarded himself as having the competence in action of this kind where the Orthodox Church was concerned. We were hardly convinced by this explanation but it has to be said that it was offered with a certain lightness of touch. And when we further enquired if we could say to religious leaders in the West that any initiative they might take towards a joint Conference would be sympathetically considered by the Patriarch his reply, though cautious, was not unsympathetic.

When the Patriarch asked why the Western Churches would not support the Stockholm petition Kathleen Lonsdale said that as a scientist she felt a responsibility for the development and use of the atom bomb and hated the idea of atomic or any other war, but that it was not enough to condemn the atom bomb and those who had used it. We had to admit that we had all sinned, not just one side or the other. She finished on a positive note with the words "Whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things . . . and the God of peace shall be with you." (*Philippians* 4, 8-9). The language of the Bible gave the interpreters a little trouble, so a Bible was fetched and the Patriarch read the chapter from beginning to end. At the end of our talk we were photographed by the ubiquitous *Tass* photographer who appeared from another room and who was particularly anxious to get one of "the Patriarch looking at the ladies." We were then each handed, by the Patriarch, a copy of a book printed in English entitled "The Russian Orthodox Church in the Fight for Peace." This book contains translations of speeches delivered by the heads of the Orthodox Church at the various Peace Conferences and meetings of the Soviet Peace Committee, and records important decisions taken by the Orthodox Church to promote the cause of peace.

In March 1950 the Patriarch Alexius, head of the Russian Orthodox Church issued an appeal to the heads of the Orthodox Churches in Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, All-Georgia, Serbia, Roumania, Cyprus, Greece, Bulgaria, Albania and Poland and the replies received are published. The appeal states that "the clergy of our Russian Orthodox Church has already resolved this question. It has taken a stand in defence and in consolidation of peace. It has joined the ranks of the world fighters for peace."

The replies received are interesting. The heads of the Orthodox Churches in Poland, Roumania, Bulgaria, Albania and Armenia all signify their willingness to join the Defenders of Peace. The replies from Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria and Antioch are more restrained, although naturally as Christian leaders they share the

Patriarch's identification of peace with Christ's teaching. No reply from Constantinople appears in the book. Other typical quotations from this book are as follows:—"The Russian Orthodox Church is invariably with those who are fighting for the freedom and independence of all peoples, who are fighting against the colonial and semi-colonial oppression of peoples, an oppression shameful to civilised mankind, who are fighting for genuine democracy, for universal peace . . ."

"The Russian Church, together with all honest and advanced mankind the world over, believes that with the united will and action of all the peoples fighting for peace, we shall smash all the plans of the warmongers and uphold the cause of peace."

"History is being made and is being advanced along a new path of progress and civilisation by the invincible and boundless forces of democracy and their inspirer the Soviet Union, at the head of which stands the first champion of peace, the Great Stalin."

Through all this book runs the idea of "cleaving humanity into the friends and enemies of peace." The Patriarch himself denounces the "Vatican and the leaders of the Catholic hierarchy for the beastly hatred which they have for peace and for the People's Democracies," as well as the "handful of blood-thirsty Anglo-American businessmen who seek to warm their hands over the fire of a new war."

Again "no person can be called a Christian if he is hostile to the democratic system which implements on an unprecedented scale the elementary precepts of justice, under which people enjoy rights that eliminate inequality and all persons receive aid in their old age and in the event of illness and invalidism. A grave sin is being committed by those Christians who manifest hostility towards these great and blessed activities."

Enough has been said to show the attitude of the Churches in Russia towards the peace movement and their support of the political philosophy behind it.

Those who are cynical may say, if they please, that these leaders have been bought. We do not say so, having met them. They have rationalised a difficult position. So have those Christians in the West who justify participation in and preparation for wars which they believe to be "contrary to the will of God." These Russian Orthodox Church leaders speak in sincerity with all the forthrightness and perhaps one may say, the vituperation, of Old Testament prophets, but we believe their attitude to be wrong. It is impossible to preach peace and hatred (of people: not of sin as



such) simultaneously, and that is what they are doing. It is a combination that we met constantly in the Soviet Union and we had constantly to protest against it.

We were not in the Soviet Union long enough to conduct careful enquiries into the general position of the Churches in Russia to-day. But it can be said that the religious situation has now reached a certain stabilisation on the basis of a clear differentiation of function between Church and State. It is only tolerated on this understanding. The total identification of the Church with resistance to the German invasion has made it inexpedient if not impossible to continue persecution of the Churches on the scale and with the consistency of the pre-war years. In consequence relations between the Churches and the State authority are easier than probably at any time since 1917. Both Baptist and Orthodox leaders spoke encouragingly of the number of baptisms in the one case or of admissions to the theological seminaries in the other. Yet the congregations in the churches, though large, are predominantly composed of elderly women. The Communist view might well be that with aging congregations on the one hand and the materialistic indoctrination of the rising generation on the other, the inexorable process of time will take care of the religious problem in Russia.

Nevertheless the fundamentally religious spirit of the Russian people may prove more tenacious than those hostile to religion would admit. Much can and will change in the Soviet Union and those who prophesy the inevitable and complete secularisation of the country may yet be confounded. Certainly there is life and even growing life in Russian Christianity to-day.

After our conference with the Patriarch, we went for a late evening walk in the Gorki Park of Rest and Culture. Here we saw another side of Soviet Russia and one of which they are justly proud. There was an entrance fee of one rouble and inside were young Russians amusing themselves walking on greasy poles, trying their strength, and generally having a good time. We were struck by the high standard of public behaviour. It was a hot night, but the park was spacious, well-lit, with plenty of seats and places to eat and drink, though no alcoholic drinks, apparently. Further inside the Park we came upon a Green Theatre where there were thousands of young people sitting in the open air enjoying classical music. We went inside; a man was singing, and as we walked up to the barrier the attendant beckoned to Paul Cadbury. Thinking she meant that we were to go into the front row, where there were a few empty seats, he politely shook his head for we did not wish to stay, and it was only afterwards, as we walked away, that Nekrasov, one of our interpreters, started laughing. It appeared that, deceived by Paul's formal dark blue suit and white shirt, she thought he was the next

singer and had said, "Oh, I know your face; come this way—on to the stage." Paul Cadbury thought afterwards what a chance he had missed and wondered how they would have responded had he been able to go on and read our Message of Goodwill in Russian. We felt that they would have taken it well.

A few minutes later they poured out and engulfed us: an exceedingly orderly and cheerful company. Many of them were moving on to another show, where there was a performance of Verdi's music, following some acting.

The only blot on the landscape was a display of posters depicting Attlee, MacArthur, Truman and others as warmongers. Sorokin seemed surprised when Leslie Metcalf told him that if similar posters deriding Stalin or Gromyko were put up in Hyde Park they would create a disturbance and would probably be torn down by well-wishers of the Soviet Union, not necessarily Communists.

The next day (Friday, 20th July) six of us visited the Zis motor-car works, as we had no official conferences. Kathleen Lonsdale continued her talks with Professor and Mrs. Mahalanobis, and then went shopping.

At the Zis works the biggest cars are made, and some four-wheel and six-wheel trucks. There are 30,000 workers, of whom 40 per cent. are women. They work three shifts a day and there is a six-day week. We found that it was never possible to get a straight answer anywhere about the rate of production. They always gave the target for the last five-year plan and said that it had been fulfilled or over-fulfilled, as the case might be. The layout of the factory was typical of many such factories in the West, but it did not seem to be quite up-to-date as far as plant layout and process engineering are concerned. It was interesting to note that a number of the more intricate machine tools had been made in their own factory, as they cannot now get replacements nor delivery of new machines from the U.S.A. The works have just started to manufacture bicycles. We saw none in the streets of Moscow. Paul Cadbury wrote of this visit:

"The standard of safety devices and machine guards was well below our standards at home. The Clinic was more of a family health centre than ours at Bournville, and there were even some beds for short-term hospitalisation. The Palace of Culture was on a much larger scale than our recreation facilities, even when the disparity of numbers is taken into account, but their theatre seats 1,000, as does ours." The social services were very impressive but we had no means of knowing how typical they were, and thought it possible that this, like Bournville, was the kind of place that *would* be shown to visitors.

After lunch Gerald Bailey, Margaret Backhouse and Paul Cadbury went to call on the Chargé d'Affaires of the Peoples' Republic of China. Mr. Tseng received them in a most friendly way at the Chinese Embassy and listened while Gerald made a statement of our hopes and views as Friends and spoke of the wish of great numbers of people in Britain that there should be peace and goodwill between our countries. Margaret and Paul were both able to mention personal connections and interests in China: Paul's two boys had worked there in the Friends' Ambulance Unit during the war. Mr. Tseng then referred to the reactionary British Government, to American air bases and the re-armament programme. Gerald replied that we as Quakers opposed armaments, but that these developments were a measure of the real fear and tension which divided East and West, and that they were supported by majority public opinion in England. It was our object to try to break down the causes of fear and tension and to replace them with creative understanding, so that there might be disarmament and not re-armament in all countries. Mr. Tseng took the points well and left no doubt in the minds of his hearers that China needed peace.

In the evening we all went to a "Summer Theatre." Unfortunately the Bolshoi Theatre was closed for the summer and it was impossible to see the famous Ballet. The show which we did see consisted of folk dances and ballet numbers by representatives of the many races making up the Soviet Union. It was a pleasant evening's entertainment, although the seats were again hard ones. After the ballet Gerald Bailey, Mildred Creak and Kathleen Lonsdale caught the midnight train to Leningrad; the next morning (21st July) Margaret Backhouse, Paul Cadbury, Frank Edmead and Leslie Metcalf got up early to take the plane for Kiev.

## Chapter 6

### Leningrad and Kiev

THE journey to Leningrad began overnight and we had sleepers in an old pre-war "wagon-lit," with its notices all in French. For the first time on our trip we felt chilly, and there were no extra blankets to be had, but it was really a pleasant change after the extreme heat of Moscow. The journey took twelve hours and the train seemed to amble along in a rather leisurely way. We were told that the line had been badly damaged during the war and hurriedly repaired. We enjoyed the scene from the windows when it became light enough to see. This was our first glimpse of real open country, with miles of marshy flat land. Much of it appeared to be undeveloped, but there were patches of very lovely birch forest, many wild flowers and at intervals the little brown wooden houses which are such a characteristic feature of the countryside. At one point the dykes and small lakes were fused into a great stretch of water, almost like the sea. This reservoir, which we saw best on our return journey, we were told was part of the waterworks constructed to join the Volga and the Moscow rivers, and so increase Moscow's water supply, to cope with the very large increase of population since the Revolution.

We were interested in the wayside stations, with their little refreshment rooms (only tea and cigarettes were available on the train during the 12-hour journey) and small barefoot boys selling little bags of wild strawberries; interested, too, in the railway officials along the line (mostly women) who came out to signal the train on and who cultivated a little garden, had a small haystack, a goat and a few hens. Their houses were like oases in a huge stretch of undeveloped country. We arrived at our destination at about noon and were met by members of the Leningrad Peace Committee.

After lunch they announced, somewhat to our dismay, that they had arranged a visit to a shoe factory for us. All three of us (Gerald Bailey, Mildred Creak and Kathleen Lonsdale) were rather tired after the journey and as we had no particular knowledge of British



factories and therefore no standards of comparison, we were not greatly interested in seeing shoes made in Leningrad. We did our best to become interested, however, for some of our hosts here were obviously factory workers and we wanted to be friendly with them. After two or three hours spent in discussion with the manager, wandering along production lines and admiring the restaurant, library and concert hall, we were really exhausted and had to say so, so we were taken back to our hotel.

Leningrad, as a city, is very different from Moscow. The whole town is laid out according to a plan, and it was developed as were the Nash terraces in London, at a time when good building design co-existed with the means to carry it out. The streets, not so wide as in Moscow, but more tree-lined, radiate from the golden-domed Admiralty building. The town has the tough, exhilarating feeling of a port; the river Neva is wide, and, when we saw it, seemed very blue and choppy and high up the banks, quite unlike the sluggish monster which usually passes for an urban river. Leningrad rides the Neva river, and the Winter Palace of the Czars, adjoining the Hermitage Gallery, looks across a great expanse of water to the old fort and the University buildings.

The town itself is seamed with canals and bridges giving long vistas of terraced houses. These 18th century buildings often have a background wash of vivid colour—green for the Winter Palace, blue for the Smolny Palace—with decorative pillars and pediments picked out in white. Such buildings are now mostly turned to public use. The Hermitage has for long been a world-famous picture gallery, but the adjoining palace is now also part of the gallery which houses a breath-taking collection, including works by Velazquez, Rubens, Rembrandt and many others; of Poussin there is a particularly fine collection. We visited this gallery next day.

Another lovely house, formerly the palace of a family well known in Czarist circles, had become a Pioneer Palace, that is to say, a central Club House for the younger end of the youth groups officially sponsored by the Government. Because the children in the U.S.S.R. have a long summer break most of them are away in camps at this time of year, but a few remained in the towns.

We were invited to stop on our way back to the hotel in order to see this Pioneer Palace, but only Mildred Creak had sufficient energy left to accept. She writes: "It surprised me to wander through this magnificent building, with marble staircase, crystal chandeliers, white painted walls, delicate Louis Quinze furniture, and polished floors and to see no sign of destruction or even of hard wear and tear. Some of the rooms were used as libraries, others for nature study, pets, painting and modelling. There were some

children there, and they performed for us a happily un-selfconscious puppet play modelled on a Russian fairy story. These boys and girls were working with several women staff, another teacher accompanying on the piano. I would guess their ages to range from around eight years to 14 years; and we were told that they had made their puppets and planned the play with help only over the music.

"The story of the little girl, lost in a wood and finding her way home with the animals' help was a very simple, happy little tale, and their singing really lovely. They 'felt' to me younger than they looked, if the expression may be allowed; they were perhaps more docile and certainly less self-conscious than a corresponding group of English children of that age. It was a delight to see this performance of theirs amidst our other, more weighty, concerns.

"They have all sorts of activities going on at this place, physical training, and various hobbies, including some very good modelling and painting. I saw one puzzling and saddening picture. It was drawn by a nine-year old boy and it was called 'Children in New York.' It showed two very poor boys in rags, with no shoes and stockings, sitting very forlornly in a gutter. I argued with them about that one . . . I am not sure that the Russian teacher with whom I argued really felt convinced that the problems of New York children were due more to having too much than to being so poor that they hadn't anything at all, like the ones in the picture."

That evening we met members of the Leningrad Peace Committee. They included a woman doctor from the children's hospital, who was very stiff to begin with, but who thawed gradually as she became convinced of our sincerity; a poet who had become a *Tass* journalist after the war; a trade union official, a middle-aged Stakhanovite factory worker. (The name "Stakhanovite" means either "shockworker" or "innovator". At the Zis plant we had seen a special Stakhanovite shift in which men and women had set themselves the target of 150 per cent. production as compared with 100 per cent. on a normal shift. At the shoe factory we had been shown the way in which one factory worker had been able to increase the overall efficiency of the factory by better utilisation of the leather in the process of cutting soles. Each of these kinds of Stakhanovite would receive substantial monetary rewards and what seemed to be the equally coveted reward of "public praise"). Another member of the Leningrad Peace Committee was an elderly woman, a weaver, who was introduced to us as "a mother of sons who had fallen in defence of their country." This elderly weaver was herself a Stakhanovite, and intensely proud of it. She said very little, but intervened near the end to ask what the women of Britain were doing for peace, and she was told something of the work of the long-established Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

and of the service of women in other organisations. Wherever we went in Leningrad, we were aware of the impact of the war in people's memories. We saw buildings which, like our own in London, still bore the scars of bombing, and we learned of the incredible hardships and fortitude of the people of Leningrad during their 480 days' siege, when many died of starvation and shelling was always frequent.

When we went, the following day, to the Summer Palace, we saw the wanton destruction of the buildings there which were occupied by the Germans. The Summer Palace has been called the Little Versailles and is set in lovely surroundings on the Gulf of Karelia, eight miles or so out of Leningrad. As they were eventually forced out of it, the Germans systematically destroyed these beautiful little buildings, thus adding fuel to the fire of bitterness left after the long siege.

Perhaps it was this and other memories which made the meeting with the Peace Committee in Leningrad both more difficult, and also more worth while, than some of our other meetings. The group was small enough to be intimate, about 15 in a room at our hotel. There were three of us, three of our interpreters who came with us from Moscow, and this mixed, unassuming, group of Leningrad people, whose men had mostly fought in the war.

They began with a statement of the international situation as they saw it, with the U.S.S.R. threatened by the aggressive action of the U.S.A. The "war of colonial aggression", as they called it, in Korea was at its height. The problems of India, of Viet Nam and of Africa were mentioned. The pacifist position and the pacifist tradition of Friends was something quite strange to them. "But surely you would fight for peace?" one of them said incredulously. The conference went on long enough to give a free exchange of views. Gerald Bailey put forward very ably the reasons why the United Nations stood for an attempt to reach a peaceful solution within a system of differing political views. There was much argument on the question of the withholding of visas for the Sheffield conference, and we gave reasons for what had been done, while deploring how it had been done. Kathleen Lonsdale tried to explain the spiritual basis of the Quaker refusal to take up arms, and the "Holy Experiment" of William Penn in Pennsylvania was quoted to show that this was no negative attitude, but one involving great responsibilities. It was perhaps the nearest we got to an expression of what is involved in peaceful living and talking together, while maintaining views and beliefs that must have been poles apart. In recalling this meeting, we find it almost unbelievable that everything said had had to be translated sentence by sentence, when so much unity had been gained. Our interpreters worked very hard that evening.

The following day Kathleen Lonsdale was unwell, but Gerald Bailey and Mildred Creak experienced what was, perhaps, our highlight in entertainment: a visit to the Opera in Leningrad. Mildred speaks again: "The Company was the Ukrainian Opera Company singing Rimsky Korsakov's 'The Czar's Bride' in their own language. Our places were in the once Royal box, the opera was most beautifully staged and sung with the emotional fervour which by then we had learnt to expect from the Russians. The audience and the cast seemed in warm sympathy, in appreciating this story of Ivan the Terrible, and the Boyars of Old Russia. The opera house was full of people of all ages, and their un-selfconscious enthusiasm was infectious. There was certainly no formality, although two women wore long frocks.

"This naturalness in behaviour is something we noticed wherever we went. In the streets and parks, in the theatres, in public transport, the Russian people showed a readiness to join in conviviality. Even without language, it seemed easy to make friends."

That night as we said good-bye at the train, our thoughts went back to the conference we had had the night before.

The Stakhanovite was telling us that his mates had done his jobs for him so as to release him for what they regarded as the important job of showing us round. Referring to Saturday's meeting he said: "That was a good meeting we had, but it was —" then hesitated for a word and clenched his fist and used a word which our interpreter gave as "boxing." The Quakers in a boxing match made a good joke, and, laughing, we agreed very seriously that the fight had been possible because we trusted one another.

We arrived in Moscow at noon on Monday, 23rd July.

Meanwhile Margaret Backhouse, Paul Cadbury, Frank Edmead and Leslie Metcalf had gone by air to Kiev, leaving Moscow early on the morning of 21st July, and the story is continued from their accounts.

This journey gave us the opportunity to demonstrate to one Russian that good may come out of the West. One of the interpreters who accompanied the party was desperately unhappy at the idea of the journey because he was invariably airsick; but Margaret Backhouse produced a preventative, and for the first time in his life he was able to enjoy himself in an aeroplane.

At Kiev airport we were welcomed by a deputation from the Ukrainian Peace Committee and were motored to the Intourist Hotel, where the welcoming party all left us, except for the vice-chairman of the committee, Ivan Kunduba, Professor of History at the University. He told us that he had started life as a farm



labourer and would still have been one under the pre-Revolutionary system. The Revolution, he said, had given him his chance to study. He was our friendly guide and companion in Kiev, where we found ourselves in another foreign country. Although Russian is universally understood, Ukrainian is the local language. We were told that under the Czars only Russian might be used in the schools: now under the Soviet system the position is reversed; Ukrainian is used, but Russian is taught as a school subject.

After lunch we made an extensive tour of this beautiful city by car. We saw parks, wide roads, statues and many areas of war damage, but as many buildings being put up, often replacing on the old site the pre-war large buildings deliberately blown up by the retreating Germans in 1943. The city is on a hill, and at the top of the hill we suddenly came out of the city and could overlook the river Dnieper and the plains beyond. It is a wonderful view. On the other side of the river we could see a broad stretch of sandy beach with coloured umbrellas and bathing tents. This pleasure beach is being developed all along the river. On the city side of the river the hillside, which drops fairly steeply down to river level, is covered with trees and is a recreation ground with an open-air cinema and theatre, restaurants and shelters from which one can admire the view.

After a long drive and several walks from point to point, we had a look at a creche from the cars and then stopped at a day nursery, Kindergarten No. 1, run for children between the ages of three and seven years whose mothers were working.\*

When we arrived at this palatial building we found some 200 children, brown and well, playing in the gardens in diminutive blue shorts and sun hats. It was about time for them to go in for their supper and we saw their wash room and changing room, where each child had a locker with a roll-up front.

Supper was attractively laid out at individual tables for four or six and consisted of a slice of hot meat roll with boiled potatoes, which had been well mixed with butter and parsley, tomatoes and salad, rolls, and a fruit drink. The children were well-behaved, yet lively enough and as happy as sandboys. The matron was about 50 years old and appeared to have a great affection for the children.

The play rooms were lavishly provided with educational and constructional toys, which had all been put away very neatly for the night. There were plenty of fresh flowers about. There was also an excellent gymnasium and rooms where the children did modelling, painting and nature studies.

\* See photograph, page 70

Paul Cadbury has recorded in his diary a particularly pleasant incident:—

"Before I left England a Friend had sent me 5s. to buy a toy, if possible an animal, to give to a Russian child. Here were the children, but I had not been able to buy a toy as it had been difficult to get any money of our own. However, Leslie Metcalf had managed to draw a small amount and I had six roubles in my pocket. I therefore asked if I might hand it over to buy a toy, explaining the loving motive behind the offer. The remarkable matron, however, was accepting no money, but entered into the spirit of the thing. The symbolism of an actual gift to the children appealed to her desire for international understanding. She had some new toys—animals—and would like me to use one of these. So when we had finished our tour two nice little black bears with large white bows were produced; Margaret Backhouse gave one to a boy selected from the youngest group, and I gave one to a dear little girl. They were for them all 'With love from England.' I kissed the top of her head, and I trust our Friend will feel that his concern was carried out, if not in the letter, very much in the spirit. We were the privileged messengers.

"But the symbolism was not over. The children wished to send a present to children in England, and out came two more small cherubs, and we were handed two Russian wooden dolls-in-dolls. I told them mine would go to a School for Crippled Children. When we adjourned to the office Margaret Backhouse wrote a simple outline of our purpose and mission in the visitors' book, which we all signed. When it was translated to her, the matron said: 'I teach the children that they must love English and American people.'"

Even here, however, as subsequent conversation showed, a distinction was drawn between the ordinary people, who want peace, and their wicked governments, who are planning war; and again we had to make the point that although we, as Quakers, oppose rearmament—and can do so—the governments of the West are freely elected. They represent the people and reflect their fears and suspicions.

The children could remain in the nursery from early in the morning until about 7.00 or 7.30 in the evening, and parents had to pay from 30 to 80 roubles a month, according to their income. By the time we left many parents had arrived to fetch their children home. Some of the fathers who came had been watching a football match on an adjacent field—a rather one-sided game, for the final score was 18—0.

From the kindergarten we went on to the Monastery of the Caves of Kiev. It is one of the three great monasteries of Russia.

The caves or catacombs, with their glass-topped coffins in which lie the embalmed bodies of many saints, was one of the most interesting monuments we had seen. The Archimandrite, who had a very beautiful face, took us round these caves himself and also into the crowded church, where a Bishop was conducting a service. Paul writes: "The dear old Archimandrite . . . received our message of goodwill and wished us well. I was conscious of his own goodness and the example which I have no doubt he gives to all around him. It is easy to talk to the simple priests and monks; they strike me as godly men." The main building had been deliberately destroyed by the Germans, who drilled holes in the walls, placed sticks of dynamite in the holes and blew it up. A wanton act, as the monastery clearly had no military significance.

On Sunday, 22nd July, we left the hotel in cars at about 10 o'clock to visit the Molotov collective farm about 25 miles outside Kiev. We went with mixed feelings. We were aware of the ruthlessness with which the land had been collectivised and the suffering that this had brought at first to millions of people and yet we wished, if we could, to see the present position objectively and without prejudice. The journey across the flat lands of the Ukraine along dirt roads was fascinating, if somewhat dusty, and the visit to the farm itself was an opportunity of the greatest interest. We took notes on the methods of agriculture, finance, marketing, labour employed, and so forth. While no doubt we were taken to one of the more successful farms, the view of the countryside from the air and from our long motor drive left no doubt that it was on the same lines that other land was being farmed and that the land itself was in good shape. We were conscious that the system was working, that there was the atmosphere of "a happy ship," as they say in the Navy. As we were walking from the Centre to the 50-bed hospital we met a lorry; it stopped so as not to cover us with dust. In it there was a brass band, mainly of boys. Sunday is a rest day for those not actually working on the harvest. We asked if we could have a tune. Yes, but we were warned it was a band only formed three months ago, and the standard of playing proved the point! It was a quite unstaged incident.

The farm was started in 1930 and before the War it had been very prosperous and the village was well organised. During the occupation the Germans, we were told, burned down all the buildings including the clinics and removed all the machinery and livestock and made a concentration camp of part of the farm. 40,000 prisoners had been kept there, of whom 3,000 had died or been killed. We were shown a mass grave where 500 civilians had been buried. The farm had been rebuilt and the economic position was sound once more. The State has helped with finance since the restoration. This farm is a large co-operative society, and the members hold a deed from the State which makes over the land in

perpetuity to them. Electricity is extensively used for milking, thrashing, pumping and for lighting the cottages. Farm machinery is provided by a tractor station which services nine collective farms.

The Charter governing the Collective lays it down that there shall be a general meeting which elects a Council including a Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Council holds office for two years at the end of which time it may offer itself for re-election. General meetings must take place at least once every two months to hear a report from the Chairman whom they can dismiss at any time. The Chairman told us that he had been re-elected ten times and so had held office for 20 years (with an interval during the War). He seemed a thoroughly capable and honest fellow and we were not surprised that he had been re-elected so frequently. There is a radio relay station connected to 2,500 loudspeakers in the homes and the Chairman can address the people over this network from his office. He gives a report of progress every evening and the relay system is also used for lectures by agricultural and medical experts.

In the village there are 900 children of school age and four schools, including one secondary school, with 40 teachers. At the time of our visit more than 300 young people out of the 6,000 population were away receiving higher education in technical schools and Universities. In past years the local population has produced 200 professional people—doctors, teachers, etc., and strangely enough, at 1,000 kilometres from the sea, one Admiral! Before the revolution there were two teachers and 30 pupils in this area; and seven or eight people out of ten were illiterate. Now the village has six libraries; twice a week they show sound films in the local hall and twice a month artists from Kiev come to give plays.

Medical facilities include a polyclinic and a hospital. There are eight qualified doctors and therapists and all medical help is free. The state pays the doctors and the teachers. Each family in the Collective has its own private plot of ground (about 1½ acres) which includes some orchard. On this they keep one or two cows, a pig, poultry and beehives. They draw grain, hay, straw and vegetables from the Collective for their own use. There are apparently no fixed wages but people are paid according to the work they do, with various systems of incentive payments based on milk yields, egg production, etc. This particular Collective owns six shops in Kiev, but in addition it is doing an export business to other parts of the U.S.S.R. It covers about 27,000 acres and employs 2,000 out of a resident population of 6,000—a far larger enterprise than we had expected.

After a discussion in the Chairman's office, we walked around the nearby farm buildings, visited the hospital and met the doctor in charge (a woman). We asked a hundred questions and got immediate and satisfying answers. In spite of the increasing use of



machinery there is still a lot of hand work. On our way back we passed two peasants scything a hay field. We saw several herds of cattle on the clover stubble being watched and looked after by children. About half of these were running barefoot, and a few of the women on the road were also barefoot. The work clothes looked pretty rough (Margaret Backhouse, with the keener eye of a woman, described some of them as "rags"), but one or two people, who obviously were having a half-day off were tidily dressed.

Whatever the justice, or lack of justice, in the methods by which the collective farms were taken over from their previous owners, there is no doubt that they are now an integral part of the community and are working with a fair degree of success.

After our tour the Chairman took us to his own house, which could just seat 15 people in the largest room, and gave us a gargantuan feast of local delicacies. We started with a generous zakouska including ham, tomatoes, cucumbers, caviare, cheese, etc. This was followed by a large plate of pork and potatoes. Then came Ukrainian pancakes—rather solid but well doused with cream and honey. We were also expected to drink (or eat) a glass of very thick sour cream with a glass of red-currants and red-currant juice. After this we finished with apples, cream cake, chocolates and tea! The Chairman's wife was disappointed with our English appetites, conditioned by long years of austerity, and they were all slightly amused by our soda-water habits, as the table was well charged with bottles of Vodka, cherry brandy, and so on.

We had a very lively discussion around the lunch table with the Chairman and his wife, a trade union official, two or three brigade leaders as they were called, Professor Kunduba, who had remained with us all the time, and the senior school-teacher in the village, a very intelligent middle-aged woman who seemed to understand English and who became our chief inquisitor. She asked why we still allowed corporal punishment in English schools. Leslie Metcalf replied that this practice was rapidly dying out, and asked her how she kept control in her school. She replied that they had young pioneer and young communist organisations in the school and that these helped very much in encouraging a spirit of good discipline.

We discussed the Press and the school teacher said, "We don't need an opposition Press as we are a united people. We have plenty of variety; we have papers for women, for farmers, for children and so on but they all have the same political line. Why not?"

Paul Cadbury got into a technical discussion (which did baffle the interpreters!) on the relative merits of the Russian "three-impulse" and the English "two-impulse" electric milking machines, and the conversation included a cross-examination on equal pay for equal work for men and women and questions as to Quaker and

general opinion in Great Britain on Korea, Viet Nam and other major world problems. Paul Cadbury told those of us who were not present very frankly "I felt we were likely to go round the world in any case, and as I was anxious to avoid long argument on Malaya, I jumped to India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma, and put the position in a positive way. There we could claim something—a real and lasting friendship with a free India. We closed on this note."

Leslie Metcalf continues: "We left at 3 p.m. and drove back to Kiev, had an hour's rest and then at 6 p.m. gathered round another groaning board to meet the Ukrainian Peace Committee. We really had to refuse most of the food this time, and this went for the Russians who had been with us at the collective farm, too."

Mr. Korneichouk, Chairman of the Committee, whom we had met in England (see Chapter 1) and his wife were present at this gathering. He is Chairman of the Ukrainian Soviet and is famous as a playwright (he had been described to us as the Russian Shakespeare). There were also seven University professors (three of them women), the Bishop of Kiev and a leading Baptist who had had a telephone conversation with his opposite number in Moscow and so knew all about our visit to their Church there. In the main, formal speeches were avoided, but the conversation ranged over the questions of the proposed Moscow Economic Conference, reasons why the peace campaign was suspect in England and even more so in America, hostile propaganda and the need for well-wishers in both countries to try to correct mis-statements, and the danger of a peace organisation making accusations of aggression against other countries. Mr. Korneichouk said that he had been impressed by the arguments on similar lines of a Danish lady at the Copenhagen meeting of the World Peace Council's executive committee, to which he had proceeded after our meeting with him in England. Frank Edmead spoke manfully for truth for about three hours, in Russian, to the three women professors, and Margaret Backhouse talked to Mrs. Korneichouk, who was very sore that her visa for Sheffield had been refused.

Finally, at about 10 p.m. Leslie Metcalf made an impromptu broadcast to the Ukrainian people (which was recorded), based mainly on the 1950 Message of Goodwill; he spoke in English, but his words were to be followed by a translation into Ukrainian. Whether it was ever used or not we do not know, but he subsequently received 500 roubles for the exercise, and the whole party felt rich from then on.

Leslie Metcalf adds, "After the broadcast Frank Edmead and I went for a walk in Kiev and saw some drunks in the streets for the first time since we had arrived in Russia."

Next morning the group flew back to Moscow, where they arrived at 11 a.m. in the pouring rain.

## Chapter 7

### Three Days of Conferences

THE weather had broken and it rained heavily for some days. The two parties back from Kiev and from Leningrad joined forces at lunch on Monday, 23rd July, and exchanged experiences. In the afternoon Kathleen Lonsdale had an unexpected visit from Magharita Zakharova, Chairman of the Soviet Women's Anti-Fascist Committee, who wanted to discuss the Stockholm Peace Appeal, the Appeal for a Five-Power Pact and the situation in Korea, and who was completely bewildered by the Western attitude which was explained to her. It seemed to her so obvious that the aggression was all on the side of the United Nations, and no progress was made at all until Kathleen Lonsdale suggested that what was wanted in Korea was peace, and not the allocation of blame. Then her face lit up and she agreed with deep feeling. Mme. Zakharova was a medical woman, so Mildred Creak, who had joined in the conversation, discussed with her the problems of the care of children in a population where the majority of the mothers work. Later in the week Mildred Creak visited a children's hospital and a polyclinic, the latter being of special interest because it is already doing what will eventually be covered by Health Centres in Great Britain. "So far as medical contacts were concerned," she wrote, "what was impressive was the humanity of outlook towards the child patients rather than the equipment which, in the two places seen, was less elaborate and less advanced than would be the case in England or indeed in Western Europe generally. To give an example, the babies' ward had a large ice-box in place of a refrigerator, but full use was made of parents visiting and helping to nurse younger children. In some wards, the mother's bed was alongside the baby's cot in the wards, but no masks were worn. We in Great Britain are coming to appreciate the emotional risks to a young child which strict asepsis and protection from bacterial contamination demands. In general, though creches and Nursery Schools are approved and are ever increasing in number, the care given to young children in the U.S.S.R. appeared to be particularly tender and 'personal'."

In the late afternoon we were all invited to meet the Minister of Education of the Russian Federal Republic, Mr. Kairov. He explained to us that he was one of 16 equal Ministers of the autonomous Republics of the U.S.S.R. There is no All-Union Ministry of Education, but if the All-Union Government takes a decision that concerns all the Republics then all Ministries have to fall into line. For about an hour-and-a-half we listened to an able dissertation on the Soviet system of pre-university and pre-school education (see Appendix II) and we asked many questions. He was particularly interesting on the subject of nursery schools and most eloquent in his insistence on the wrongness of corporal punishment in schools. Only a bad teacher, he said, would need to use force in order to maintain discipline; physical punishment was illegal in the Soviet Union; it led to lying and deceit, but never to self discipline, which was a measure of inner qualities. When asked for his views on the subject of correspondence between English and Russian school-children he said, "I support the development of such exchanges subject to the laws and rules of my country." In answer to a question on the teaching about the U.N.O. and its Specialised Agencies he replied that there was no special training but these subjects were discussed in the last year in modern history.

The Minister concluded by saying that they brought up their children to love their country and to love all friends of their country throughout the world. When reminded by Paul Cadbury that it was also important to love even our enemies the come-back was immediate: "Not peace, but a sword," seemed to be the Christian doctrine. Kathleen Lonsdale told him of William Penn's remark, "Force may compel, but love gains"; and with a little hesitation he agreed that this was important, but very difficult. As we left, he called back our interpreter to ask who we were; it appeared that we had puzzled him. He seemed to us to be a most competent and sincere man.

That evening we dined at the British Embassy, where we were again made very welcome. We told our host and hostess something of what we had seen and had a most interesting discussion with them, which helped to round off the picture for us.

Next morning Margaret Backhouse and Mildred Creak visited the Children's Hospital referred to above, and others went to the Tretyakov Art Gallery. This Gallery is devoted to Russian Art and contains 50,000 pictures, although many of them, of course, are not displayed. One remarkable picture about 50 feet wide shows "The Appearance of Christ to His People." The artist, Alexander Ivanov, devoted his whole life to this one picture and in the room containing it are also shown the sketches of individuals and groups which went to make up the complete picture. The intelligent middle-aged



woman guide gave a very reverent description of the picture. We were interested to find that she assumed that realism was the culmination of art, and judged 19th century pictures by their realist content. Many people, both grown-ups and children, were being shown round.

Most members of the group spent some time this day out alone either walking or shopping, although the rain was torrential: far too much for the gutters and drainage system of Moscow to cope with. But the streets were still full of people.

In the afternoon Kathleen Lonsdale visited the Institute of Crystallography (see Chapter 9). Her car had some difficulty in getting there, for it was on a side street which was badly flooded. Leslie Metcalf went to the Polytechnic Institute to see what he could learn in the fuel and power section about the mining industry. Of this visit he adds: "The woman who showed me the exhibits tended to claim that most of the mining machines on display had been invented by the Russians! I gathered that the output from the mines had risen from 29.1 million tons in 1913 to 250 million tons in 1951, and that an experimental 400,000-volt transmission line was being erected between Moscow and Kuibishev."

At 5 o'clock we called on the Burmese Ambassador, Mr. Maung Ohn, and had tea with him. He told us that Burma, being a small country, had decided not to pretend that its representatives were anything that they were not, so he and his Counsellor lived alone without servants and without a car. They did all their own cooking and housework, etc. He was most friendly and helpful, welcoming us with the words "I know all about your 'concern'—that is a Quaker term." His advice to us was to be very patient and very sincere. He pointed out how very sensitive are the Russians: that they hate criticism, and any comparisons with the West are resented—by ordinary people because they do not believe them, by thinking people because although they know of the value of many institutions in the West, they do not like to be reminded that there is anything as good as or better than in Russia. The true standard of comparison is with their own past.

We gave a dinner party that night in our own hotel to our Baptist friends, at the expense of the Soviet Peace Committee. We got into groups with our five guests at and after dinner and discussed savings, taxes, pacifism, fundamentalism (they are fundamentalists) and Quakerism in all its aspects. Some of us also discussed the legal position of conscientious objectors in the U.S.S.R., of whom there are some, though very few, and who appear to be tolerated, though perhaps only because they are so few. As we parted from these simple, sincere people we felt that they had become in every sense our friends.

The next day (Wednesday, 25th July) Leslie Metcalf was able to satisfy his private interest as a mining engineer and visit a coal mine.

He writes:

"Sorokin and I got up at 5.30 a.m., had rather a scratch breakfast and set off in the direction of Tula, which is due south of Moscow. I had been promised a visit to a coal mine and as time did not permit to take me to the more important Donbas coalfield a visit had been arranged to the No. 9 Mine of the Tula Region, which is part of the coalfield known as the Moscow Basin, although the mines are over 150 kilometres from Moscow.

"Unfortunately on this occasion, and no doubt because there were only two of us going, we did not have one of the large well sprung Zis motor cars, but one of the small Victory cars. The driver had a maddening habit of speeding the car up to about 70 miles an hour, then suddenly letting out the clutch and putting the engine into neutral and coasting along until the speed had dropped to about 30 miles an hour. Of course the maximum advantage was taken of hills to let gravity do the work rather than the combustion of petrol. Sorokin told me that all drivers are paid a bonus on the amount of petrol they save out of a set gallons-per-mile allowance. Our driver had strong commercial instincts, as he kept up his efforts all the way to Tula and back, a round trip of about 250 miles. I couldn't get Sorokin to remonstrate with the driver, and my international driving licence unfortunately did not cover Russia!

"The road was good and perfectly straight most of the way. We passed through some gently undulating country, with many a wood of silver birch trees to add beauty to the scene.

"We arrived in Tula about 10 o'clock and were taken out to the mine, which is some distance outside the city. Arrived at the mine, and the introductions over, we changed into clothes provided for going underground, and were given hard hats, rubber boots and oil safety lamps. The type of clothes provided and the changing and bathing facilities were very similar to those provided in most Continental countries I have visited.

"The coal around Tula is very near the surface and the shaft which we descended was only 64 metres deep. There were three shafts and they were sunk in 1948. Underground trolley locos pulled the one-ton mine cars to the pit bottom and emptied them into two-ton skips.

"The coal is found in one horizontal seam up to four metres

thick and is of a poor quality, being almost a brown coal. Mining conditions, therefore, are easy and there is no gas. In the district I visited the thickness of coal was about two metres. Some interesting Russian-made machinery was being used. In one heading there was a type of continuous miner with two chains revolving on a head which rotated back and forth through a horizontal arc of about 60°. In another place I saw a loading machine working on the same principle as the American Joy Loader.

"The roads were well lit with fluorescent lamps, although these were just bare tubes and were not enclosed in any fittings.

"What surprised me was the number of women working underground—there seemed to be more women than men, and the women were handling the mine cars right up to the face. In Russia there is complete equality of the sexes and women spread the tarmac on the road, mix the concrete for the big building projects and do all manner of tasks which we consider to fall exclusively within the scope of workmen. It is not really so surprising, therefore, to see women working underground in Russia, and the conditions in the mine in Tula with the thick seam, good roads with plenty of clearance for the trolley wires and adequate lighting made it difficult to argue very strongly against the practice adopted in Russia, although if we introduced women workers into our mines there would be trouble!

"After coming up the pit and having a shower we proceeded to the Manager's office for a discussion. The Manager was a big bluff mining engineer with a sense of humour; he reminded me of one or two Yorkshiremen I know. He asked me what I thought about his mine. I started off cautiously by praising the things I had liked. He cut me short and said: 'I know all that, but tell me what is wrong with it', so I told him everything I could criticise and he kept asking for more.

"By 4 o'clock the early breakfast and the couple of caviare sandwiches we had had in the car had reduced Sorokin and myself to a state of exhaustion; so we dropped some appropriate hints and we were taken along to the canteen, where a marvellous spread was prepared for us.

"At the table were also the mechanical engineer, the electrical engineer and the trade union leader, as well as two mining engineers. We were in a small room, obviously kept for officials, which was next door to the men's canteen. As we were some distance out of Tula the meal must have been provided from the canteen's own resources. It was certainly excellent. There were several small-holdings near the colliery where sunflowers, tomatoes, etc., were growing. The manager said they did not worry about subsidence but just let it happen.

"We were so late in leaving Tula that Sorokin suggested that we might spend the night there. This would have been interesting, but as there was no Intourist Hotel there I felt the call of my comfortable room at the National, and so we returned to Moscow, arriving about 10.30."

Meanwhile the rest of the group had had a busy day. The morning was spent in making a visit to the Kremlin. On this visit we were accompanied everywhere by a tall, silent young man in plain clothes, a couple of soldiers and a woman guide, well-informed as usual and with a keen interest in her job. She had a very charming hat, and when it rained, she was delighted to borrow Mildred Creak's gay umbrella. She shared it with Frank Edmead, whose raincoat was presumably still under the penicillin, or at least had not yet been recovered by him. We saw some marvellous old churches, the mediaeval paintings in which were being carefully restored and cleaned as were those at Zagorsk, artists, scientists and technicians combining to do the job really well. Nearly half were finished and we could see the wonderful original colours. It may seem curious that an atheist, indeed an anti-religious, State should take such pains to preserve these churches, which had formed part of a monastery, as well as including the Czar's private chapel from ancient times. But there is a strong feeling that these monuments are part of the people's artistic heritage, they belong to the people as a whole, and must be preserved for posterity. We wished that some of our art students from England could see these treasures of the past. We were told how much gold and silver Napoleon had carted away, with his doom, from Moscow; but there was plenty left. We saw the Palaces of the Czars with their splendid furnishings and marvellous halls, the Armoury (around which a small section of the Red Army was also being shown) which is a beautifully displayed exhibition of treasures, including silver-plate presented to the Czars by Queen Elizabeth I and by James I, pearl-studded and jewelled vestments, swords with diamond hilts—a far cry to the atom bomb!—and the fashionable clothes of the aristocracy of several centuries. We went into the Chamber of Soviets, sat in the seats of the Deputies and were given a short lecture on the Soviet Constitution. All these buildings are enclosed in the great wall of the Kremlin, surrounded by gardens, and surmounted at the pinnacle of each tower by a red star.

After lunch we went to the headquarters of the Trades Unions of the U.S.S.R. We were there formally addressed by Mr. Kudryatsev, Vice-Chairman of the International Department of the Trade Unions, and by Mr. Lerner, of the Wages Department of the Trade Unions. Although we were intensely interested in what they had to tell us, some of us had other appointments to follow, and we



got a little restive as we listened to their set speeches. Mildred Creak wrote of this meeting: "We could have got their stuff more vividly, in half the time, by a simple question and answer, in fact free discussion. When we finally broke in and asked for this, and put our questions, these leaders had no difficulty in coming off their platform of formality. I got the impression that they, as well as we, enjoyed this departure from plan, but I had the feeling that the other way had become a generally accepted pattern of delegates' meetings."

Many questions we have been asked since our return from the U.S.S.R. have related to the functions of Trade Unions in the Soviet Union (from our point of view their very existence seems to be something of an anomaly) and Mildred Creak's summary of this Conference is therefore included as Appendix III.

From this meeting Paul Cadbury went to pay a visit which had a special interest for him. He says: "I spent a most interesting time at the Red October chocolate and sweets factory. In general it is many years behind our practice, but in one or two sections there have been recent changes to more up-to-date production. The Director, Mr. Zotov, and two of his colleagues, unlike some Russians we have met who do not want to hear about the West, listened to every word I said with almost embarrassing interest. My main pleasure was their obvious interest in the problems of raw cocoa, and particularly in agricultural problems in the Gold Coast. I have given Mr. Zotov a warm invitation to Bournville. How easy it is for those with common interests to forget international tensions! The factory was clean as a new pin, and so were the clothes of those of the 3,000 workers I saw."

At the same time Kathleen Lonsdale attended a reception at the Academy of Sciences in Moscow (see Chapter nine). After some discussion on scientific matters she was asked to describe the Quakers' work for peace, and found her listeners incredulous as she mentioned that, where possible, Quakers undertake relief work on both sides in war. "Surely," she was asked, "one side must be the aggressor? Surely your sympathies must be with those who are attacked?" She was able to assure them that Friends indeed, very often, find themselves more in sympathy with one side than with the other in a dispute, but that work which is intended to be reconciling is needed on both sides, and the suffering to be relieved would be on both sides also.

After dinner that evening the six of us met the Editorial Board of *News*, the fortnightly publication in English, whose editor, Mr. Morozov, we had met when we first came. Paul Cadbury wrote in his diary: "This was one of the frankest, friendliest, hardest-hitting

discussions we have had and he said at once that our very real criticisms of their first number were warmly welcomed. There is in so much Russian writing an undue emphasis on their own progress, and no reference to their difficulties, e.g., overcrowding, and misleading statements about conditions in other countries. This we pointed out, giving chapter and verse, and said it did more harm than good. I also pointed out that English people were more convinced by under-statement than by over-statement.

"Professor Morozov, whose face is so strangely reminiscent of my dear friend, Arnold Rowntree, and to whom therefore I was instinctively attracted, is the editor. He has written books in English about Shakespeare, and understands us better than most. There is, I think, a good chance that if the tone of *News* is altered it might become an important influence in helping people in England to understand Russia. In any event, their Editorial Board know what we think and were extremely receptive to the suggestions we made. If *News* could take an informative and non-critical line and could fill its pages with factual articles about Russia, it must be given every encouragement in England.

"After the conference Frank Edmead and I walked back down about one-and-a-half miles of Gorki Street. At 10 p.m. the shops were open, the streets crowded. Everyone was very well-behaved and purposeful. An eating house—comparable with a Lyons tea-shop—was crowded."

Another interview with Soviet Press officials took place when Gerald Bailey and Frank Edmead went to visit the Editors of the influential Soviet journal *Literary Gazette*, which appears three times a week and has a circulation of three-quarters of a million. Its publishers are the Union of Soviet Writers (*Pravda* is published by the Communist Party and *Trud* by the Trade Unions). Besides Konstantin Simonov, the leading poet who is the Editor, the Assistant Editor, the Foreign Editor and the Science Editor were all present.

Simonov and his assistants began by taking that day's copy of the *Literary Gazette* and going through its contents. Gerald Bailey asked if they printed articles on the achievements of British science, and why, in their reviews, did they very largely ignore British writing except by people ideologically in sympathy with communism. Why, for instance, had they not reviewed Priestley's novel "Festival at Farbridge," which gives a picture of life in an ordinary English town in Festival year?

Frank Edmead gives the reply: "Simonov used the last question to answer all the lot. He knew Priestley well. He had been in his flat in London and had met Priestley when he had come

to Moscow. During the war many of Priestley's plays had been performed in the Soviet Union. But when the *Literary Gazette* had published a letter from Ilya Ehrenburg appealing to writers for support in the peace struggle, Priestley had taken a negative attitude. 'We cannot approve anyone who can remain neutral on a question like that,' said Simonov. Gerald, after touching lightly on the question why the literary merit of a book should be determined by political considerations, answered in the usual way, pointing out the difficulties which Western peace-lovers have when asked to subscribe to the World Peace Council policies. 'We Friends,' he said, 'have fought and suffered for peace for 300 years. I beg you, because we do not subscribe to the Stockholm appeal, not to consider us—nor Priestley—as warmongers.'

"Simonov, of course," continues Frank Edmead, "was not convinced, but he promised to seek out for us articles his paper had published on England (we heard no more on this) and to review 'Festival at Farbridge' if it was worth it. Whether we would have got even as far as this if he had known that at that time Priestley was writing an article for the 27th October, 1951, issue of *Collier's Magazine* is doubtful." The issue referred to, which was called "Preview of the War we do not Want," was widely condemned, as much in the U.S.A. as elsewhere.

## Chapter 8

### Last Days in Moscow

**B**EFORE we separated for the week-end we had addressed a letter to Mr. Gromyko at the Foreign Office in Moscow explaining our purpose in coming to the Soviet Union and enclosing a statement setting out seven points which we thought might provide a basis for more friendly relations between East and West. We sent these in because we did not know whether we were going to have an opportunity of meeting any of the Soviet political leaders or not. On our return to Moscow we had heard that Mr. Malik wished to see us at 2 p.m. on Thursday. We went to the Foreign Office at that hour. Mr. Malik was friendly and much younger than some of us had expected: not dissimilar in appearance from a young American executive. With the deft touch of the diplomat he put us at our ease at once. Although he speaks English quite well the more formal part of our interview was conducted with the help of the Foreign Office interpreter. The main responsibility for speaking for the group fell on Gerald Bailey, who had prepared the original statement. The full account of his speech and of Mr. Malik's reply is given as Appendix I, and in Chapter 12 are given some of our more considered reflections on the general peace implications of this and other meetings.

Briefly, we made proposals for action, on a reciprocal basis, to restrain hostile propaganda, to improve correspondence and visits between East and West, to refrain from intervention in the internal affairs of other nations, to share in international disarmament, to co-operate in U.N. plans for giving economic aid to backward countries, to improve the constitution and machinery of the U.N., and to initiate high-level conversations on these issues. Mr. Malik's replies gave the official Soviet views on all these questions and was very largely a defence of Soviet policy and an accusation that all Soviet initiatives for peace made in the U.N. Assembly had been frustrated by American and British intransigence. We realised, of course, that Mr. Malik is a politician in office, that he could not be expected to give anything away, or to announce a change of policy



to a small religious group. We were grateful for the opportunity he gave us of putting our point of view to him, which was what we had wanted to do.

During a friendly half-hour's interval for refreshment in the course of our formal interview we pressed informally the point in regard to non-intervention. We said that assuming the acceptance of Mr. Malik's assertion in regard to non-interference by the Soviet Government, there remained the question which was at the root of much of Western fear and suspicion—namely, the subversive action of native Communist parties in non-Communist countries undertaken as part of an international conspiracy believed to be stimulated and controlled by the Kremlin. In reply to this Mr. Malik sent for and quoted to the Quaker group the following statement made by Mr. Stalin to the American newspaper man, Mr. Roy Howard, on 1st March, 1935: "The export of revolution is nonsense. Each country if it wishes will make its own revolution, but if it doesn't wish, there will be no revolution. For instance, our country wished to make revolution and did really make it in 1917 and now we are building up a classless society. But to assert that we are allegedly desirous of making revolution in other countries, interfering in their life, is to assert that which does not exist in reality and what we have never professed." The Quaker group asked if this formula could be said to be appropriate to the situation in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, when it would appear that there had been a simple seizure of power by the Communists. In comment on this question Mr. Malik said in effect: Had it been overlooked by the Quaker group that the Western powers, and particularly Great Britain and France, had betrayed the Czechoslovak Republic to Hitler by the Munich Pact in 1938? The inference of this comment was that this betrayal had set in motion an historical process, the logical, if not inevitable sequel of which was the revolution of 1948 which placed the Communists in power, a reply which of course hardly satisfied us, and we said so.

When the reading of the prepared statement was completed we thanked Mr. Malik for the detailed consideration and reply given to the seven points. We expressed the hope that however much the Soviet Government might judge that its peaceful initiatives had been rejected, it would nevertheless persist in making proposals that could really hope to produce a peaceful settlement. In reply, Mr. Malik referred to a further statement of Mr. Stalin in *Pravda* in February 1951 which said: "As to the Soviet Union it will hereafter pursue consistently the policy for the prevention of war and the maintenance of peace." "I declared in my radio speech before leaving New York," added Mr. Malik, "that whoever desires peace must desire to find peaceful means of resolving problems."

Gerald Bailey then said that he personally had listened with special interest to the reiteration of the principles which, in the view of the Soviet Government, should govern economic relations between economically backward and economically advanced countries. He would like to suggest that the Soviet Government give careful consideration to the possibility of proposing a world-wide mutual economic aid plan based on these principles and making possible the utilisation of the resources alike of the United States and the Soviet Union to meet the common needs of all mankind.

In reply to this Mr. Malik said: "I am very glad to hear that Mr. Bailey was particularly impressed by the proposals submitted by us to the United Nations in respect of economic co-operation and the development of backward countries and in respect of the question of international trade. I must stress once more, however, that these proposals were rejected by both the Americans and the British."

Mr. Malik then enquired what was the opinion of "British official persons" on the questions we had submitted to him and in reply we told him that the statement had not yet been seen by the Foreign Office, but we were able to refer to the talk we had with the British Foreign Secretary before we left London and in particular to the assurances then given to us by Mr. Morrison that despite the failure of the preliminary conversations in Paris, despite the British Government's conviction as to the necessity of maintaining sufficient defensive strength in the West, they (the British Government) remained profoundly anxious to find a genuine basis of understanding and co-operation with the Soviet Union.

The interview closed with an enquiry from Mr. Malik as to "the influence the organisation of Quakers has in the United Kingdom" and with an expression of his appreciation of the group's going to see him and of encouragement for its work for world peace. He had read "Steps to Peace" and thought that the American Quakers who wrote it were brave men!

It is true that Mr. Malik's reply to the seven proposals was largely a restatement of policy declarations already made by the Soviet Union at the United Nations and elsewhere. Certainly at several points his reply left the specific question unanswered and no one would suggest that it carried us materially further toward our goal. It could hardly have done so in the circumstances. But it is perhaps significant that in Moscow itself we were able to call on the Soviet government to initiate peaceful actions and that the government thought fit to treat our suggestions with considerable seriousness. Western observers in Moscow, who are hardly over-sanguine people, were much impressed by this treatment of the views of an unofficial group of persons from Great Britain. They were inclined

to take it as yet another indication of a changing wind in the Soviet Union, bringing the possibility of more peaceful relations with the West.

Our interview with Mr. Malik ended at 5.30 p.m. On our way back to the hotel we saw in the Red Square, stretching away back into the Revolution Square, the long queue of people, six deep, waiting to file through Lenin's tomb. This queue formed from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. three days a week, and was sometimes half-a-mile long. Mildred Creak and Kathleen Lonsdale suddenly felt a desire to go with these people and to see if it were possible to share their feelings. Would it be worship—men will sometimes make themselves a god if they do not believe in one—or just sightseeing? Mildred Creak writes: "We were let in ahead of the patient crowd without protest when they were told who we were. People file through quietly and there is none of the display of emotion described in the early days. Men, women and children take their look while the solemn young soldiers stand guard at head and foot. The embalmed body of Lenin is flood-lit and lies on a bier in ordinary clothes. It must help many simple people to believe in the reality of the immense, the revolutionary change which is still being worked out in this new world of the U.S.S.R." It did not seem either like worship or mere curiosity; it was more like affection. Yet we could not forget the many stories we had heard of cruel treatment of political dissenters, and the prison camps, the existence of which was not denied.

Meanwhile the rest of the group found the foreign reporters waiting for them in the hotel to hear about the Malik interview: *Reuters*, the *Associated Press*, the *New York Times* and the *Sunday Times*. Being wise after the event, they realised that they should have invited the Soviet press too.

We had an appointment at 9 o'clock that evening with Professor Grekov and Madame Popova, of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber of Nationalities, but we were very tired and this was perhaps one of the least profitable of our conferences. Grekov began by telling us that they had many things in common with the Quakers: no races in the U.S.S.R. are superior, all people have equal rights. In the main England and Russia had agreed from the 16th century onwards. Why should they not agree to-day? The U.S.S.R. did not fear war, but they did not need war and they had an immense amount of reconstruction to do. The Government was solid for peace. After we had asked a question about the work and constitution of the Foreign Affairs Commission, Grekov told us that this Commission had drafted the bill which made war propaganda a criminal act. We had heard many times about this law. Anyone in the Soviet Union who does anything to incite people to make war

on another country is guilty. No newspaper must suggest the possibility of an attack on another country nor threaten other peoples. In no newspaper, we were told, would we find, for example, maps to show the shortest routes to atom bomb Washington or London, although similar maps with Moscow as the target had been published in newspapers of the West.

We commended this law, but asked against whom in the Soviet Union was it directed? The answer was that the decision to pass the law arose from a request put forward by the World Peace Council, but that there had been no prosecutions in the Soviet Union under the law and it was unthinkable that there should be. No Soviet citizen would be warlike. It had been passed as an example to other nations!

We then raised the question of hostile propaganda: posters, cartoons, etc., depicting in insulting terms the governments of the West as warmongers. Did these not stimulate a warlike attitude in the Soviet peoples? We admitted that there had been mistakes in U.S. and British policy, but the Western Governments were not plotting war. Their reply was that the Soviet Press had a duty to answer critical articles in the foreign Press. The peoples of the West did not know the truth about Russia and all peace proposals from the Soviet Union had been turned down out of hand by the Western Governments. "Our newspapers speak the whole truth," declared Madame Popova "The newspapers in the West tell lies. What can we believe when speeches are made in Congress and in the House of Commons about dropping atom bombs on Moscow? Our people are a great and peaceful people. We are building Universities, canals and power stations. We are spending so much for peace that there is nothing left to spend for war. This will refute the lies which are told about us. The whole thing is quite obvious." She hoped that our visit would help but was herself very bitter that her visa for the proposed Sheffield Peace Conference had been refused. The atmosphere at this point was rather strained, and Mildred Creak suggested that if we around the table, all of whom admittedly wanted peace and were working for peace, found it so difficult to agree and to understand each other's point of view, was it not all the more difficult for nations to understand each other and all the more essential that they should try to do so?

After a cup of tea, which improved our tempers, Mme. Popova raised the question of the Five-Power Pact, but we doubted whether pacts by themselves were useful, unless they represented a real desire for peace and an enlightened and friendly public opinion. We had some further discussion about Quaker service in various parts of the world, often on both sides of the line, for example in Spain and China. Again this aroused surprise. Surely, said



Grekov, in the American Civil War the Quakers were on the side of the negroes? We agreed that the Quakers certainly did work hard for the abolition of slavery and had helped negroes to escape, but they did not believe in violence.

Our Conference ended at 11 p.m. and Paul Cadbury, Frank Edmead and Leslie Metcalf decided to walk back to the hotel. As they left the offices they saw a man run out with something under his arm, chased by some other men. Then a policeman appeared and effected an arrest with very little fuss and about the same degree of sang froid as a London Bobby! Moscow is probably one of the best policed cities in the world. There seems to be a traffic policeman about every 50 yards and woe betide the driver who over-shoots the lights. Our driver did so once and the policeman came up and addressed him severely: "Don't you realise that you might cause an accident? Do you want to kill someone?" The driver simply said "Delegation" and got away with it that time, to our interpreters' amusement.

Friday, 27th July, was our last day, and at last we were told that the prison visit for which some of us had asked had been arranged. It had proved perhaps the most difficult of all our requests and we did not know almost to the last minute whether it would be possible. Margaret Backhouse, Mildred Creak, Frank Edmead and Kathleen Lonsdale left at about 10 a.m. and were driven out of Moscow, eventually turning off the main road on to a dirt road full of pot-holes and landing up at a barbed-wire enclosure situated next to a railway. The prison consisted of a number of temporary huts, built during the war for another purpose, which now housed 885 men and 15 women. There was also, within the enclosure, a factory built in 1950. A permanent two-storey building, which was to replace the huts, was going up.

We had a preliminary talk with the governor, a military-looking man, and his assistant. Kathleen Lonsdale, since she has considerable knowledge of English prisons, asked most of the questions. There were no set speeches on this occasion and we gathered that we were their first foreign visitors. We asked if there were any political prisoners there and were told there were not; it seemed to be similar in most respects to an English prison of the best type, such as we would show to a foreign guest in our country, but with two main differences. The first was that the sleeping accommodation was far more crowded than we should allow. The new building, they said, would be better planned and allow more sleeping space. The second was that the prisoners, nearly all of whom worked in the factory (the women acted as lorry-drivers), were paid the full outside rate for the work that they do, including the usual incentives of increased piece-rates for over-fulfilment of plan,

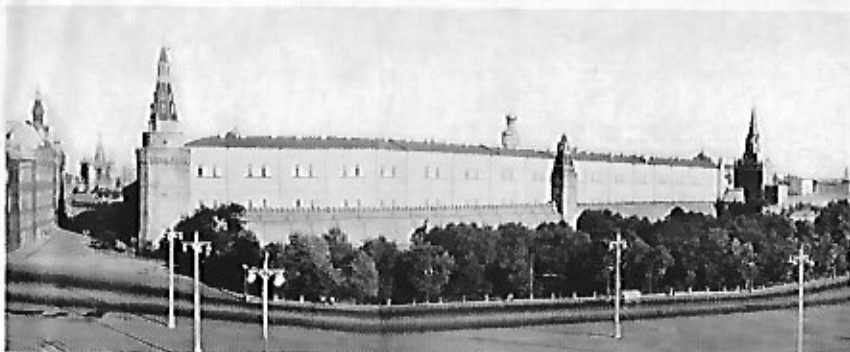


GROUP AT THE TROITSKY MONASTERY

(Tass Agency)

THE KREMLIN

(Leslie Metcalf)





VIEW FROM THE HOTEL NATIONAL, LOOKING OUT  
TOWARDS THE KREMLIN (TO RIGHT, BEHIND GARDEN)  
ACROSS THE REVOLUTION SQUARE

(Leslie Metcalf)



MEETING WITH THE PATRIARCH AND THE METROPOLITAN

(Tass Agency)

THE GROUP IN MOSCOW, WITH SHOPS  
AND FLATS IN THE BACKGROUND

(Leslie Metcalf)

DYNAMO STADIUM, THREE FRIENDS AND AN INTERPRETER

(Tass Agency)







TWO LITTLE SOVIET CITIZENS

(Leslie Metcalf)

and the display of photographs of the best workers ! There were deductions of 15-18 per cent. for food and administration, and 15 per cent. compulsory savings. The remainder belonged to the prisoner (paid in amounts of not more than 100 roubles at a time) and could be spent in the prison shop, which we inspected, or sent to relatives, or put in the Savings Bank where it would gain interest. Some outside (free) workers were also employed in the factory, which made pumps and conveyors for sale to contractors.

There were some amusing incidents. We had asked the governor what kind of crimes the prisoners had committed and his reply was : "All kinds of anti-social crimes : larceny, blackmail, manslaughter, murder : all relics of capitalist mentality." The interpreters must have had a sly joy in translating that ! They decided that we ought to write something in a "Visitors' Book," but had to find a suitable notebook, which we started. Our woman interpreter was laughing as we came away, and when Kathleen Lonsdale asked her why, she said that the prison governor had asked "How is it that such a nice lady knows so much about prisons ?" Irena knew by now that Kathleen Lonsdale had spent a month in Holloway Prison as a conscientious objector during the war, but she had preferred to tell the governor that his visitor was an important British prison official !

Meanwhile the others had been out shopping or preparing for the Press Conference that was to take place in the afternoon. Leslie Metcalf bought some atlases and an embroidered cushion cover and table runner, and then wandered into a crowded fur shop where people were buying beautiful silver fox furs at alarming prices. He says : "I saw a queue in one place stretching a long way and lined with police. I followed it to its source and found the people were waiting to enter a shop where there was a sale on. To direct the queue into the right place an empty bus was drawn up across the pavement at right angles to the building just beyond the main entrance, and four lorries were lining the pavement terminating at the bus so that the surging queue could not surge beyond the door but was bound to enter. When the doors opened all was very orderly."

At no time, perhaps, were we placed in a more difficult position than at the time of the final Press Conference, held under the chairmanship of Konstantin Simonov, in the afternoon before our departure for home. Edward Crankshaw, in the article in a Sunday newspaper quoted in Chapter Two, has pointed out that every time a visitor to the U.S.S.R. praises a single aspect of the Soviet Union his remarks will be widely quoted as typical of his general reaction, and always with the gloss that there is nothing like it elsewhere. He

CHILDREN OF THE KIEV DAY NURSERY

(Leslie Metcalf)



goes on to say: "These conducted tours, in fact, have a dual purpose: the visitors are not meant only to act as mouthpieces for Soviet propaganda in their own countries but, by expressing loud admiration for the regime's very patent achievements, to assist Soviet propaganda inside Russia as well."

Although ours was not a "conducted tour," we felt that there might be a good deal of truth in this warning, and we were particularly anxious, perhaps over-anxious, not to be misquoted either by the Soviet press or by our own.

Paul Cadbury recorded the events that evening in his diary as follows: "About sixty journalists, Russian, British and American, met us at the offices of the Soviet Peace Committee. Gerald led off with a statement of our aims, our experience and our gratitude. Leslie spoke of the progress of Russia since he first visited it when he was twelve years old, and again twenty-five years ago. There were twelve or fifteen questions from both Russian and American journalists and two from British journalists. There was a general feeling among the Russians that we had not said enough of what we had seen. We had expected to be asked more questions, so I was turned on to say thank you and a word about rebuilding Moscow and the other cities and the collective farm. Let it be admitted that no-one was satisfied." We certainly did not please the Russian journalists, who left out everything critical we had said from their press notices; and it was clear that our interpreters were upset because the British and American journalists present were obviously pleased at the reticence we had shown. In view of the kindness we had received most of us felt a little unhappy at appearing so ungracious. This feeling was expressed by Leslie Metcalf in a letter written soon after our return, in which he described the Press Conference, and our interpreters' and our own reactions as follows:

"At the Press Conference we leaned over backwards not to get carried away by any enthusiasm for what we had seen, for fear of being misreported in our own Press, and it turned out to be a very dull affair. The only questions we were asked by the Russians were political, except for a woman representative of the *Literary Gazette* who asked us about our impressions of the cultural life of the Soviet Union. As we think of culture in a narrower sense, being Westerners and members of the privileged class, we didn't say that we thought the well-behaved cheerful young folk pouring out of the classical concert in the Gorki Park of Rest and Culture were an inspiration. We didn't comment on the people who crowded into the exhibitions and picture galleries, nor on the number of open-air theatres and cultural opportunities for the working man. Perhaps because their culture is too mixed up with propaganda we were afraid of getting mixed up too. The Press is

controlled and avoids being sensational. The book-stalls are not flooded with cheap crime and murder fiction.

"The Moscow people perhaps seemed almost too orderly and well-behaved, but we might have been more generous about their culture which, until the Revolution, was the very exclusive privilege of the well-to-do. I am all for freedom of thought, of expression, of choice of the lowest plays and the lousiest films if you want them, but we pay a price for freedom and we abuse it a good deal. I am not saying that the standard of their culture is up to ours. In this Festival year in Great Britain there have been more interesting plays, exciting productions, artistic revivals and good music than for many years and the Festival itself is something of which we are justified in being proud. But there is no need to be smug and I think we were a bit smug at our Press Conference."

After dinner we returned to the Peace Committee Office and had a pleasant informal meeting with about six or seven members of the Committee, including Mr. Tikhonov, the Metropolitan, the two Baptists and Academician Ivanov, to whom Paul Cadbury presented an early photograph of the visit of three Quakers to the Czar in 1854 (one of whom had been Rachel Cadbury's grandfather), and also the American Quaker booklet "Steps to Peace." Ilya Ehrenberg dropped in for a short time and had some conversation with Leslie Metcalf, but it was clear that we were not prepared to put the Picasso dove in our buttonholes any more than they were prepared to admit that the U.S.S.R. might be wrong sometimes.

Moscow was lovely when we left the hotel for the airport at 6 a.m. the next morning. The sun was shining on the Kremlin, the swifts (Moscow is full of swifts) were darting shrilly above the newly-washed streets and pavements. Most of our interpreters came with Mr. Tikhonov to see us off. Leslie Metcalf continues: "While we were waiting for the plane Sorokin came over and sat next to me and for about twenty minutes poured out a flood of criticism of our handling of the Press Conference—more in sorrow than in anger. We were very good friends and I felt sorry for him because I am sure that his success is judged by what delegations are prepared to say of the impression left on their minds by what they have seen in the Soviet Union. For some time after we left Moscow I felt very miserable. Analysing my feelings since, they are something like this. A feeling of admiration for the achievements of the Russian people, a desire to be friendly with them individually, friendly with those we had met and seen—with the Baptists shaking us by the hand in their church, with the people in the street, in the Zis factory, at the Monastery, on the collective farm, at the mine, in the Art Galleries, with our interpreters doing their job faithfully and sincerely. A desire to forget the Cold War,



Communism, the Iron Curtain, the Peace Committee, the rate of exchange and all the barriers to free intercourse. And yet realising that politics cannot be divorced from life and that we all share the guilt for the present world upheaval by our selfishness and indifference. A few simple gestures made at the right historical moment would have made all the difference in Asia, in Africa, in Persia and in Russia too. I don't mean appeasement born of fear, I mean whole-hearted generous gestures, expecting nothing in return except the opportunity to be friends on equal terms. Sorokin shares the guilt too by trying to defend everything the Soviet does and by being so conditioned to this way of thinking that he is bitterly disappointed because we don't shout paeans of praise over the Radio and to the Press. Because it is his job to see that we do this he missed the warmth in our hearts."

We stayed overnight in Amsterdam and arrived back in London, to be met by a crowd of photographers and reporters, at about 12-30 on Sunday, 29th July.

## Chapter 9

### Problems of Intercourse, Communications and Propaganda

SINCE the Second World War it has been almost impossible for private individuals from Western Europe or the U.S.A. to enter the U.S.S.R., and very rare for Soviet citizens to leave their country. There are exceptions. On the train from Leningrad to Moscow we met some English people, with their families, who were fur-buyers, and who visited the U.S.S.R. quite naturally in the course of their business. Diplomats also move from country to country, although their movements within the country to which they are sent may be restricted. This is certainly the case in the U.S.S.R.; although one must, of course, realise that a foreign Ambassador is something of a responsibility to any country and his safety must be ensured.

Besides business men and diplomats, perhaps scientists and newspaper men have the strongest claim to be called international travellers. So what of the scientists?

In 1945 a number of British scientists visited the U.S.S.R. at the invitation of the Moscow Academy of Sciences. Unfortunately at the very last moment some of them were prevented from leaving this country. The matter caused a considerable stir among scientists generally, and when the atomic bombs were dropped in Japan a few weeks later it was realised that those who were not allowed to go were those who might have had access to secret information. Presumably it was their discretion rather than their integrity that was doubted, but this embargo was hardly likely to be well received in the Soviet Union, our ally. Nevertheless even in 1946 a number of Soviet scientists were able to visit this country, to attend scientific conferences and to see something of Universities, research laboratories and firms making scientific equipment. Four Soviet scientists attended the Royal Society's Newton Tercentenary Celebrations, and four others came to a Crystallographic Conference held in the Royal Institution, London, in July 1946, and took a full part in the preliminary conversations relating to the setting up of an

International Union of Crystallography and the establishment of an international journal. They suggested the name "Acta Crystallographica," which was accepted. One of them agreed to join the Board of Editors, and other Soviet scientists were nominated as members of various working committees. Shortly after their return to the U.S.S.R. however, they withdrew from all these offices, no reason being given; and they have neither affiliated to the International Union which they helped to form, nor attended either of the subsequent International Congresses in Crystallography (the first at Harvard, U.S.A. in 1948, the second in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1951). Other International Unions have had similar experiences. Sometimes Soviet scientists do come to Congresses, but without any previous notice having been given of their intention to do so. One of the International Congresses, that of the International Astronomical Union, was, however, planned actually to take place in Leningrad from 1st to 8th August, 1951, by invitation of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. In January 1951, this Assembly was indefinitely postponed by the Executive Committee (entirely non-Soviet) of the International Astronomical Union, the President, Professor B. Lindblad of Sweden, giving as the reasons "difficulties of travel and planning," and the "paramount importance that the International Astronomical Union be kept intact from any political entanglements and complications." This decision was strongly resented by the Astronomical Council of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. which published the relevant documents, with comments (which may or may not be justified) in the *Astronomical Journal* of the U.S.S.R., No. 3, 1951. The facts have not been denied.

Letters sent to individual scientists in the U.S.S.R. are seldom answered, even when they are addressed in Russian characters. It is not usually possible to know for certain whether they arrive at their destination. Even the most important scientific libraries in Great Britain seem to have found it impossible to obtain Soviet periodicals regularly. This leads to such a state of exasperation that many non-Soviet scientists and librarians have almost or entirely abandoned the attempt to make friendly overtures to their Soviet colleagues, concluding that it is best, for the time being at least, to ignore them. There are, however, some exchanges taking place.

And what of the ordinary man-in-the-street? A year or so ago an individual Friend wrote to the Soviet Embassy saying that he would like to take a holiday in the U.S.S.R., with his family, and asking whether this was possible? He received a perfectly polite reply to the effect that all the effort on reconstruction in the U.S.S.R., was being concentrated on the supply of flats and houses still badly needed by workers, and that it was not yet possible to provide accommodation for tourists.

Most people could not afford a holiday in the U.S.S.R., even if there were no restrictions on travel or currency, but they like to feel that they could go if they wanted to. It is certain that, as individuals, they could not do so at present. Nor can individual Russians pay a private, friendly visit to individuals in this country. There is little or no informal correspondence between individuals in our two countries. Since our return from the Soviet Union some of us have written postcards and letters to the interpreters with whom we became so friendly. We have had no reply. Yet letters that we ourselves sent home by air-mail from Moscow arrived within a week, apparently uncensored.

Many people in the West had letters some years ago from relatives in the U.S.S.R. asking them not to write any more and since then no letters have come from these relatives. It would appear that there are just a few official channels open, but these do not permit unlimited friendly contacts of an ordinary kind. Some individual correspondence is permitted; letters from individuals occupying official positions in the Soviet Union have been addressed to people in this country who are believed to have some personal influence, urging them to support the Partisans of Peace movement, and such correspondence has been continued as long as it seemed likely to be profitable.

This question of intercourse and correspondence was raised specifically with Mr. Malik, and his reply is reported in Appendix I.

It is, of course, true that many delegations are visiting the Soviet Union. In the hotel in which we stayed there were a number of other groups of people besides ourselves: a group of Church dignitaries from one of the satellite countries; a group of Indians, artists and writers; and, for part of the time, an English delegation sent by the Anglo-Soviet Friendship Society. Some of these had travelled much more widely in the Soviet Union than we had time to do ourselves. There were also some individuals from abroad; for example, Professor Mahalanobis, the Indian statistician already mentioned, and his wife, who were studying standards of living. It is true that our own presence in the Soviet Union effectively demonstrated that visas could be granted to non-Communists. It is true that delegations have visited England from the Soviet Union. We have been informed by Egyptian Mohammedans that Soviet Mohammedans are allowed to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Yet all this does not amount to what the scientist and the ordinary man want: normal, unfettered intercourse and communication.

Kathleen Lonsdale, who had the opportunity of talking directly to Soviet scientists on this question, says: "I spent one afternoon at the Institute of Crystallography in Moscow. There I met a



number of Russian research workers, although the Director and several of the staff were away on holiday. Through an interpreter I asked them why they did not attend the International Congress of Crystallography just held in Stockholm and why they did not belong to the International Union, even though they had attended the preliminary Conference in London in 1946 at which the Union organisation had been planned. Their reply was that the Congress had been arranged at a time which was impossible for Russian University teachers (of course, if they had been members of the Union they would have been able to point this out in advance); and I was conscious of a deep-seated resentment among them at the scientific isolation for which we feel that they are themselves responsible.

"They had certain specific grievances: the most serious of which was that, following the 1946 London conference, they had ordered crystallographic apparatus for research purposes from Great Britain and permission to export this to the U.S.S.R. had been refused. It has not been possible to confirm this by enquiry, and possibly some misunderstanding occurred. British manufacturers do export crystallographic apparatus to the Soviet Union, but they are never able to establish direct contact with their Soviet clients, and cannot tell whether the apparatus reaches the laboratory for which it was intended or whether, as in this case, it does not. Moscow crystallographers had subsequently built their own apparatus, but this had taken time.

"They were very anxious to know what research work was being done abroad, and after I had given them an account of work done in my own laboratory they gave me a very full account of their own work and presented me with reprints and textbooks. These, alas, are in Russian, and although to judge by the diagrams and numerical tables they seem to be interesting and important, I cannot read them myself. Yet I am conscious of the fact that it is quite unreasonable to expect the scientists of a country of some 200 million inhabitants not to publish their work in their own language if they want to. Fifty-three different languages are spoken in the U.S.S.R. as a whole, but, although schools are conducted everywhere in the local language of the district, Russian is taught in the higher classes as the first extra language, and English in one-third of the schools as the second (French and German being alternatives). Russian is the general language for higher education.

"The next day I attended a reception at the Academy of Sciences in Moscow, arranged for me at very short notice. I was particularly touched to find that the Director of the Institute of Crystallography had returned, especially to meet me, from his holiday on the Black Sea.

"The Academy reception was rather a difficult occasion, consisting as it did of a succession of public speeches by the officials and myself alternately. After I had asked for, and received, an interesting account of the position of the Academy in Russian academic life, I asked what, in their opinion, could contribute most to the improvement of scientific international relations. This opened the floodgates, and I received such a list of their grievances, complete with documentation, that I felt, as I remarked ruefully, rather like a whipping-boy. This analogy gave the interpreters a bit of trouble and restored the good humour of the occasion.

"Many of our difficulties arise from our different ways of doing things, and our totally different ideas as to what constitutes common courtesy. For instance, their method of establishing library contacts seems to be to broadcast, to all University libraries, one or more numbers of a scientific journal, with the suggestion (no doubt in Russian, and why not?) of an exchange of periodicals. If no reply is received from perhaps one-half or two-thirds of their correspondents this is regarded as a deliberate slight directed at the Soviet Union. We lay more stress on the regularity of exchanges between a few important libraries.

"Mr. Malik's reference to the British Government's refusal to grant visas to prominent representatives of Soviet science, culture and literature to attend the proposed Sheffield Peace Congress was repeated to us from a number of other quarters. The same question was raised at the meetings with the scientists, but here I of course gave the answer that the Sheffield occasion was really a political, and not a scientific one; and that, while we might legitimately expect non-interference with scientific congresses, scientific 'immunity' should not necessarily be expected at other times. Nevertheless, I personally regretted the Government's action on that occasion. Barriers are not broken down by erecting more barriers, nor bad manners corrected by imitation.

"In further pursuing the question of official interference with freedom of movement or of intercourse, I suggested to the scientists at the Academy that the best way of ensuring reciprocal goodwill was complete and friendly frankness, and that we ought particularly to keep in touch with each other. They emphasised that that was their especial desire and that on their side there was no official interference with correspondence addressed to the Academy, nor with their attendance at meetings; nor was there any Customs interference with parcels to or from the Academy. I pointed out that when they did not attend Conferences, etc., the natural inference in the West was that as scientists they would naturally wish to do so, but that they were being prevented by their own Government, and that this created doubts about the really peaceful intentions of their Government.

"It seems to me that, if international scientific contacts are to improve, it will need infinite patience and understanding on our part. We must be prepared to be exasperated time and time again, and must realise that, from their point of view, right is not all on our side. We must be prepared to visit them if they cannot, or will not, visit us; although at the same time we must give them every opportunity of visiting us, in as normal a way as possible. After all, if we would not care to live under their system, we should be particularly considerate of those who have no choice in the matter."

It is perhaps worth noting that our friendly woman interpreter absolutely refused to believe that the absence of Soviet scientists from International Conferences was not due to a refusal of visas on the part of the foreign country in which the Conference was held.

We had no official authority from any University or other institution to make the suggestion of student exchanges on a reciprocal basis, but the question was informally raised in conversation; it is perhaps a significant reflection of the view of the Russian man-in-the-street that the idea was received with a marked lack of enthusiasm. The reply was that there are plenty of places of higher education in the Soviet Union and that students do not need to go abroad to get fresh ideas. This is, however, probably not the view of scholars, but it is very unlikely that any agitation for such exchanges or indeed, for foreign visits on any basis, will come from the Soviet people themselves. We did, of course, also raise the question of possible work camps and international student seminars both within the U.S.S.R. and outside, with Soviet participation. We got a polite promise of consideration, but little actual encouragement. Nor were we encouraged to suppose that there would be any possibility of joint participation with Friends, on an individual and voluntary basis, in relief projects in areas devastated by famine, or other calamity, outside our own countries. A very tentative suggestion was made during the conversations with Academician Grekov as to the possibility of establishing a "Quaker Centre" in Moscow, but this was misunderstood to be an enquiry about the possibility of religious propaganda, and the question was therefore dropped.

Since returning to England, we have been asked again and again why the Soviet Government does not encourage tourists, who are, after all, a source of foreign exchange if nothing more, nor allow the Soviet peoples to travel abroad. And whether we can hold out any hope of the re-establishment, at least on the pre-war basis, of the "Intourist" agency. It is not easy to give a simple and direct answer; and any answer that we do give must necessarily be coloured by our own opinions and judgment.

It is true, of course, that there is a tremendous amount of rehousing still to do in the Soviet Union, and that, especially in big towns such as Moscow, flats and houses are terribly over-crowded by our standards. At the Building Exhibition in Moscow we were told that as a result of the last five-year plan, which had been over-fulfilled, 100 million square metres of living space (floor area exclusive of domestic offices) had been provided in the towns of the U.S.S.R. This would correspond to about 2½ million three-roomed flats. In addition 2,700,000 houses had been built or reconditioned in the rural areas. In 1950, 535,000 square metres of living space was provided in Moscow alone; in 1951, the target was 707,000 sq. m., and from 1952 onwards, 1 million sq. m. (equivalent to, say, 25,000 three-roomed flats). We saw these blocks of flats being erected, and we also saw the extensive slum areas. It is clear that almost all the people in Moscow not already in new flats will need rehousing; and whereas the population in 1917 was less than 2 million it is now certainly about 5 million. If we allow **two people per room**, and allow for the rehousing already accomplished, it may be estimated that the reconstruction of Moscow will take at least 20 years of peace for completion.

Other towns in the West of the Soviet Union which have suffered more from devastation of war have a similar problem. On the way to and from Leningrad we saw a number of country towns and isolated houses; most of these were built of wood, and unpainted, and many of them were in a very tumble-down condition. Much attention is being paid to the provision of kindergartens, schools, universities and other institutions of higher learning, of hostels for students, of hospitals and clinics, of rest homes and holiday homes for workers. One can well believe that hotels and boarding-houses will have low priority, and that such hotels as there are will be used (apart from housing delegations such as ours) for Soviet citizens wishing to visit some part of their very extensive country other than their own. The excuse given to the Quaker who wished to bring his family for a holiday in the U.S.S.R. was certainly a valid one.

We believe, however, that there are other, more serious, considerations. The Soviet Government does undoubtedly believe that there are political and business interests in the West that would welcome the downfall of the Communist regime, either by internal disintegration or by outright war. The Soviet leaders are unquestionably afraid that the opening up of tourist traffic would admit unlimited numbers of foreign agents, to spread disaffection among the people and to spy out military secrets. Secrecy has always been more of a fetish with the Russians than with the Western Powers, and isolation is one form of military security. It may be argued that if the regime were so well-established as to be sure of whole-hearted popular support there would be no need to fear



counter-revolutionary agents. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether, in the present international atmosphere, a large-scale tourist traffic from the U.S.S.R. to Great Britain and the U.S.A. would be welcomed by our own Governments, or correspondingly, by any of the Western Powers. Such visitors as do come to Great Britain from the U.S.S.R. are often only allowed to stay here for the minimum time in which their business can be accomplished.

Even if there were no barriers on this side, however, it is still doubtful whether Soviet citizens in large numbers would be permitted to travel abroad to Western Europe. The Soviet Press, radio and literature has consistently built up a picture of Great Britain and the U.S.A. as places where the workers are starved, oppressed and exploited. This picture would have to be modified if, for example, Soviet students came to this country to live in the homes of English students, most of whom receive State-aided education. The Soviet Union has achieved remarkable success in raising the standard of living and of education of its 200 million inhabitants; as compared with pre-Revolution times their material welfare has very greatly improved. It would be stupid and wrong to picture the Soviet peasant or the town-dweller as being starved or oppressed. But, as has been mentioned earlier, there is still a housing shortage, and there are shortages of other commodities which are common in the Western countries. The standard of living of a Soviet factory operative is not so far behind that of his Western brother as we often suppose, but it has not exceeded it by the amount he is told it has, and comparisons would sow doubts in his mind concerning the accuracy of the information he has been given.

There may be other, perhaps minor, barriers to the opening up of tourist traffic within the Soviet Union itself. We were impressed with the dignity of the Soviet workers. It would have been unthinkable to have attempted to tip any of them, or to have treated them as less than our equals in every way: which they were. On our way home we stayed in a hotel in Western Europe where a party of tourists were indulging in an exhibition of snobbery and bad manners, and we could not help saying to each other that perhaps it was not surprising that the Soviet Government should wish to keep out that kind of tourist. Language will become increasingly less of a barrier as more secondary schools (ten-year schools) are built in the Soviet Union. In 1939 there were over nine million secondary school children in the U.S.S.R. Now there are more, and of these, as mentioned previously, one-third learn English.

Apart from the expense of travelling to Russia, however, any present-day tourist from Britain, would find it extremely expensive to stay there, because of the adverse rate of exchange mentioned in Chapter Five. Moreover, although rents are low (an advantage to

the citizen, but less so to the tourist) the cost of food is high, and so is that of all the small oddments that tourists regard as almost indispensable; postcards of indifferent quality, for instance, cost one rouble each! It is hardly likely that tourist traffic will be encouraged for a long time to come, but if it were, a "tourist rate of exchange" or a revaluation of the rouble would be almost essential.

All visitors to the U.S.S.R. have to possess internal passports which are more elaborate than the British identity cards. This, of course, was the case even in pre-Revolution times. We were not at any stage required to submit our finger-prints, so that although the U.S.A. State Department has some of our finger-prints, the U.S.S.R. Politbureau has not. The passports were kept for us by the Hotel Service Bureau, but were needed when we left Moscow for Leningrad and Kiev respectively. We noticed that our interpreters had to show their passports when we visited the Kremlin together, but our own were not required. On the other hand, we did not need these passports when we wandered around Moscow, which we did quite freely, with or without our interpreters, as we chose. Nor was there any apparent atmosphere of secrecy or suspicion about.

Kathleen Lonsdale says: "On one of my unchaperoned expeditions, I was spoken to at some length by a woman as I stood at a street corner waiting to cross the road. Since I did not understand her, I could only smile and shake my head, and she passed on with her request to the next person, who appeared to give her the directions she required. I was also addressed by other women in shops, as I would be at home; evidence, perhaps, of the fact that my clothes did not differentiate me from Moscow housewives! Indeed, when I commented to our interpreter, Irena, on the fact that I was spoken to by Russian women as if I were a Russian, her reply was 'Well, why not? You look like a Russian'; which startled me not a little."

This freedom of movement does not apply to everyone. Newspaper correspondents from the West are hampered not only by the unfavourable exchange rate, but by censorship, restriction on access to places and hindrances to travel. Some newspapers are not permitted to maintain a correspondent in the U.S.S.R. at all.

The general lack of printed information is bound to strike a traveller coming from abroad. Although a number of people obviously have telephones, no Telephone Directory (so useful in this country for finding addresses also) is available. Enquiries about the inconvenience of this were answered by the information that each person could keep a list of the numbers of those people to whom they would normally wish to talk, and that other numbers would be given, on request, by the Exchange. No equivalent of

*Who's Who* appears to exist, nor could we find street maps or directories. Other difficulties arose in trying to make contact with individuals. When in Leningrad Kathleen Lonsdale wanted to meet the Chief Librarian of the Leningrad section of the Academy of Sciences, but this proved too difficult for our indefatigable hosts. She was told that there were twenty-five Chief Librarians, all equal in status, and was asked which of them she wanted? This did help us to understand how difficulties of correspondence might sometimes arise through insufficiency of address on letters or parcels, although it is not suggested that this is a major cause of lack of communication.

The lack of printed information does not apply only to "aids to communication." Although there were albums in some of the Exhibitions, which could be consulted on the spot, there seemed to be no handbooks or printed guides, programmes or catalogues; though we did find one poorly printed "Theatre Guide." Books, and especially small technical textbooks and pamphlets, were plentiful and very cheap. We could not, however, obtain English newspapers in our hotel, nor did we see any Western newspapers on any kiosk or in any bookshop in Moscow. There are English-Russian dictionaries and English books in plenty. Many English and American classics have been translated into Russian and other Soviet languages. Even this, however, may lead to misunderstanding. Some of our greatest British writers have been reformers: they have caricatured our faults and our wrong social conditions in order to emphasise them, to draw attention to them, and we would not have it otherwise. We cherish *Nicholas Nickleby* no less because 'Dotheboys Hall' no longer exists. But the Russians appear to believe that it does still exist, that the conditions existing in England to-day are those of the times of Dickens. Two young men with whom we talked, who themselves spoke excellent English, were incredulous when we told them of ante-natal and post-natal clinics, of District Nurses, of Evening Schools and Technical Colleges and of the number of students at our Universities receiving State-aided education.

We were given a number of small booklets, in English, issued by the Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, describing "Public Education in the U.S.S.R.", "Public Health in the Soviet Union", "Mother and Child Care in the U.S.S.R.", "Women in the Land of Socialism", "Notes of a People's Judge", "Notes of an Engineer" and so on: all extremely interesting and informative, but all marred by vituperative comparisons of their own system with those of "capitalist" countries. For instance, Frederick Engels is quoted with approval as saying of British courts of justice "The justices of the peace and the jurors are rich themselves, are recruited from the middle class, and are therefore partial to their own kind and are born enemies of the poor."

Again, of British and American education it is said: "The aim of the bourgeois school is to train, from among the younger generation, faithful servants and defenders of the capitalist order, to educate the youth in a spirit of loyalty to the exploiting ruling classes and to the regimes set up by them." In fact the Russian people are thoroughly conditioned to regard every system other than their own as vicious or decadent. They seemed not to be particularly interested, apart from the demands of politeness, in social or political affairs in Great Britain, partly no doubt because they find the progress of their own plans for their enormous territory of absorbing interest. In reply to a question as to whether U.N. Information material was used in the schools of the U.S.S.R., the Russian Minister of Education said that it was not. The scholars in upper classes of the secondary schools were, he said, well-informed about the U.N., since that information could be obtained from the newspapers.

That, however, is just the trouble. The Soviet peoples have access only to their own newspapers, radio and periodicals, and these give them an entirely one-sided account of world events, reporting just those facts and statements which put the actions and motives of the West in the worst possible light. It may very well be argued that many of the Western newspapers are also one-sided, but at least it is possible for any persons in the West who wish to do so to obtain the full text, for example, of speeches and documents relating to the international control of Atomic Energy; this is not possible for Soviet citizens. The "Voice of America" is very naturally jammed since it is regarded as counter-revolutionary in intention, and so are the B.B.C. broadcasts to the U.S.S.R., although some Russians do seem to hear them. If these are intended to promote better understanding they certainly have the opposite effect. It seemed to us that psychologically they are all wrong; so far from persuading the Russian people that we wish to be friendly and that we are not so bad as their Government paints us, we were told by those who sometimes heard them that they made them furiously angry, and they were listened to only as providing confirmation of the unfriendly attitude of the Western Governments to the U.S.S.R. Perhaps it is needless to say that the Moscow radio to Great Britain is not much, if at all, better. The peoples of the Soviet Union are convinced by their newspapers and radio that the war in Korea was begun and fostered by the U.S.A. An article on "Developments in Korea" in the Soviet English-language fortnightly *News*, for instance, referred to the "iniquity of a war against a small nation that was defending its independence" and to "hankers after colonial conquest." The Soviet peoples are constantly told that the Governments and business interests of the U.S.A. and Great Britain want war, and are rearming for war, although the peoples do not want it. This, too, is the theme of their Peace Conferences.



In our conversations we insisted that it was not true that the Governments of the U.S.A. and Great Britain were plotting war against the U.S.S.R., yet we had to admit that there are Western newspapers and indeed Western politicians who make wild and irresponsible statements. This is the price we pay for a free press and for free speech, and it is sometimes a heavy one. If the 27th October, 1951, issue of *Collier's Magazine* "Preview of the War we do not Want," already referred to, with its fantastic chorus of approval of the Utopia that is supposed to follow an atomic world war, had appeared before our visit, we think that our task would have been well-nigh impossible.

We did, however, as mentioned in Chapter Seven, pursue the subject of truthful reporting with the Editorial board of *News*, the first issue of which had just appeared. *News*, articles from which are sometimes translated and reprinted in the Soviet newspapers, has as its sub-title "A Fortnightly Searchlight on World Events" and its aims were given in an editorial as "the earnest desire to promote . . . closer understanding between the peoples of the Soviet Union and the Anglo-Saxon world," and to present "a sober and balanced picture of international events . . . with a view of promoting the cause of peace and democracy." We were listened to with respect when we suggested that in fact some of the articles printed in the first issue would arouse antagonism rather than promote understanding and we subsequently sent Mr. Morozov, the Editor-in-Chief, a letter in which we said that to show that those with whose actions or statements one disagrees are wrong is legitimate, but that to assume that they are wicked may well be a misjudgment.

The problems of intercourse, communications and propaganda are indeed formidable. At times it seemed as if our understanding of the meanings of words were as different as our habits of thought and our national customs. Any solution of these problems seems unlikely unless and until the international atmosphere improves, and yet they themselves contribute heavily to international misunderstanding and suspicion.

We can help, as was suggested in our brief report to the Society of Friends on our return from Moscow, by avoiding self-righteousness, destructive criticism and the expression in ourselves of the temper and practices we deplore and oppose in others. Unfortunately, it must be admitted that restrictive practices in the West are at present on the increase, as is shown by the operation of such legislation as the McCarran Act in the U.S.A., and by various prohibitions on travel as applied to individuals in other countries.

## Chapter 10

### Impressions and Opinions

**B**EFORE we set out for the Soviet Union we had tried, by reading and by conversation with Russians, with foreigners who had lived in Russia, and with members of previous delegations, to find out all we could about the country we were visiting. On the whole we found when we arrived very much of what we expected to find, but in some matters—and they were often the most important—we were taken by surprise.

Above all we found life in the U.S.S.R. much more "normal" than we thought it would be, and by "normal" we mean, in our insular way, "more like it is in Western Europe." We feared an atmosphere of tension, of furtiveness, of suspicion of ourselves and of the man sitting at the next table—all the attitudes which those of our party who had known Nazi Germany associated with a totalitarian regime. Our night in Prague strengthened these fears; we certainly received the impression, which may have been due to our own tension on our first night behind the so-called "iron curtain," that we were in an unhappy city.

We betrayed our own fears to ourselves and were able to laugh at them in our first few days in Moscow for we had all imagined that it would be impossible for us to go out alone, and we separately determined to test this and to see if we were followed. We were not, and in a day or two we were wandering about the city as unconcerned as if we were in our own London, Birmingham or Manchester. The fact that we were foreigners certainly seemed to worry nobody else.

We went into shops and onto trolley buses, and received in them the sort of treatment that a visiting foreigner would receive in our own country. Our stammering Russian was listened to tolerantly; if we had no Russian a whole bus-load of passengers would fly to our rescue and with great good-humour offer us and the conductor advice and help. The interpreters whom we had

been told we would never be rid of were always ready to accompany us if we needed them and to stay behind if we did not. It is commonly said that interpreters are members of the secret police; our own were certainly loyal and able Communists, for which we were very glad—it enabled us to learn more of their point of view and tell them something of ours. We used to joke with them about the reports that we said they were writing about us: a measure of the frank and friendly feeling between us.

We did have some experience of the restrictions by which the Soviet citizen is bound. We had to have internal passports (as in Czarist days also) and to have written in them our permits to go to Kiev and to Leningrad. When we went out of the city in a taxi the driver would stop at the boundary to fill up his log in case he was asked what he was doing out of bounds. On a Sunday morning, driving out of Kiev, we were stopped by a man with a little red flag. Our driver hissed "Englishmen" very angrily; the man withdrew abashed, and we swept on. We also noticed, driving about Moscow, how all traffic gave place to an occasional Zim car (the biggest and most magnificent of the four usual types) with curtained windows, which glided through regardless of traffic lights, pedestrian crossings and everything else.

The people walking about the streets looked happy and confident, and their conversation confirmed it. With whomever we talked—workers in the Zis motor works, ministers, religious leaders, school-teachers, collective-farm workers—we never heard any criticism whatever of the type of society in which they lived or of their leaders. On the contrary, they were very sensitive to any suggestion of ours that their system had in some ways something to learn from ours—except in technical matters. As already mentioned in previous chapters, Paul Cadbury was questioned for some hours at the Red October chocolate factory in Moscow, the mining engineer at Tula wanted to know all about British mining developments when Leslie Metcalf visited him and Soviet scientists were anxious to hear from Kathleen Lonsdale about the latest work in Great Britain on crystallography.

Other visitors to the Soviet Union, particularly those who speak Russian well, appear to have had quite a different experience; ordinary Soviet citizens seem to have expressed their discontent to them with as much bitterness as an English housewife in a meat shop. Some of us, too, had worked among former Soviet citizens in Germany who for various reasons would not or could not return to the U.S.S.R., and we had heard their stories. We can only say that the complete unanimity we met with, the refusal to accept any criticism, the lack of comprehension even of any other point of view, was to us the most disturbing thing we experienced in the Soviet Union.

This universal conditioning was partly, no doubt, the result of education, partly due to their having been deliberately cut off from non-Communist countries but mainly the responsibility of the Soviet Press. There was, nevertheless, a great deal of criticism of particular abuses and of individuals in the Soviet Press; it is by no means true that the bureaucrat can get away with anything.

The contentment, or complacency, that we saw in every one we met and even in the gait of the men and women in the street, had much justification, in view of the accomplishments of the Soviet regime during the thirty years that it has been in power, in spite of the backwardness of the country when it took over, and the calamitous blow of a war whose destructiveness was far greater than that suffered by us in Great Britain. Evidences of the old Russia are all about the visitor to Moscow. As soon as he leaves the centre of the city he sees the old dilapidated, unpainted wooden shacks, built before the Revolution, in which several families are condemned to live crowded together. The road surface becomes bad pavé, deeply pot-holed, dusty in hot weather and flooded in wet weather. And yet here, as in the centre, the dominating features of the town landscape are the great multi-storey buildings that are being built in various parts of the city for flats, offices, hotels and the university. Smaller, but none the less impressive, blocks of flats are being put up at great speed all over the place, and we saw precisely the same sort of thing in Kiev and Leningrad, where Mildred Creak counted 30 on the skyline. The seriousness of the overcrowding problem in the towns is equalled by the energy with which it is being tackled, and if the former were admitted, the latter would be appreciated more abroad.

There is much that we believe to be wrong or misguided in the policies and practices of the Soviet Union, but we ought nevertheless to recognise what is good in its aspirations and achievements and, in particular, the solid progress that has been made towards the economic and social betterment of the mass of the people.

Most of the guides who showed us factories, exhibitions and other institutions began their discourses with the words: "Do revolutsii"—"Until the revolution." "Until the revolution (until 1924, in fact) there were no motor car factories in Russia": "Until the revolution teaching in Ukrainian schools was in the Russian language," and so on. They would then show how much had been done under the Soviet Government. This immense pride in their own achievements—through their Government—we met everywhere. They decidedly felt them to be their own achievements; "we built the new Moscow River embankment and the bridges before the war"; "we are raising our output of tractors" (or whatever it was) "by so



many per cent." ; "we are moving mountains, changing the flow of rivers and altering the climate in Asia to make it a fruitful region instead of a desert." None of these were the activities of "them"—the rulers or the bosses.

All the pride in the Soviet achievement is symbolised in the Moscow Metro ; it was built to the greater glory of the Soviet regime as the medieval cathedrals were built to the greater glory of God. The stations are great marble halls, ornate with statuary, plasterwork, gilt and chandeliers of neon tubes. Each had its own architect and was conceived as a unity—as a work of art ; often it had an explicit theme. That at the Square of the Revolution for instance had rows of statues depicting the different sorts of people who made the revolution—the peasants, the miners, the students, the sailors, the Young Pioneers. On the walls of the station below the Gorki Park of Rest and Culture were plaster plaques showing people doing restful or cultural things—playing chess, or skipping. We were bludgeoned into admiration by the sheer lavishness of it, and it was in any case refreshing to be in an underground railway without advertisements or any of the hotch-potch of purposes and interests that have grown up in the London or Paris Metros.

The Metro became more comprehensible to us when we had seen the glories of the Kremlin. They are glories. Masterpieces—from jewellery to palaces and cathedrals—are as frequent there as books in a library, and none of us is likely again to spend a morning among such magnificence. Like all the ancient monuments that we saw in the U.S.S.R., particularly the churches, these treasures were beautifully looked after and displayed ; the cleaning of the ikons that cover the walls of the Kremlin cathedrals, so that work of 14th century and even earlier masters is being revealed from under later overpainting and varnish, must be one of the largest operations of its kind in the world.

Our guides and interpreters were as proud of these achievements of the old Russia as of the new. "This was the work of Russian craftsmen," we were told as each new wonder was revealed. It was easy to understand the feeling that if the Czars had been able to accomplish so much the Soviet society must do better still. And since magnificence was everywhere (in the Hall of the Order of St. George in the 19th Century Czars' Palace the floor had more than twenty sorts of wood in it) the new Russia must build even more magnificently.

We ourselves found it far easier to appreciate the works of visual art produced before the Revolution than those produced since. No doubt Soviet visitors to this country would say the same about our art, though for different reasons. Soviet painting

and sculpture we found depressing. In style it would have been considered reactionary in the Royal Academy twenty years ago, one would suppose ; but it was on content rather than on style that we were expected to judge what was shown us. A very mediocre picture would get a Stalin prize because it depicted a victory parade. The extreme example of this was the exhibition of presents given to Stalin ("Great Stalin," as he was usually called by museum guides and others) on his 70th birthday.

Our other experiences of Soviet appreciation of the arts were much more encouraging. We have already mentioned the Gorki Park where late one evening some of us came upon a "green theatre" in which 25,000 people, most of them young, were enjoying a programme of classical music ; in another part of the park a woman was giving a short account of Verdi's life and music before some of it was played ; meanwhile a man was passing round question forms asking for comments and suggestions on the activities the park provided. We did not go to the ballet, but we went to a "ballet concert," made up of separate dances, in a "summer theatre" in another park. The audience was again young and generous, warmly applauding particular bits of athleticism or grace that appealed to it. It was like an opera audience in Italy.

It is easy to find discreditable causes for what may merely be differences in taste or custom. For instance, some earlier delegations have reported that they were always accompanied by their interpreters—even at breakfast. The obvious conclusion was that the interpreters did not want their charges out of their sight in case they saw or were told the wrong things, or otherwise got into mischief. There may be something in this, but our own experience suggested that part at any rate of the explanation was the Russian tradition of hospitality—a tradition that constantly delighted us with the huge and delicious meals it provided, the trouble taken in arranging visits and interviews, and the attention paid to our individual inclinations. When we suggested to our interpreters that they should join us at about eleven in the morning so that members of the delegation could meet by themselves for discussion and worship beforehand they readily agreed, but implied regret that we were wasting precious hours of our fortnight in their country. When we came in after a hard day's visits and interviews at ten at night we would be asked : "What would you like to do now ?" Whatever else required it, hospitality certainly demanded that we should be kept interested and entertained all the time.

It may be, too, that the impression some of us got that the dress of the people even in the towns was poor in quality and lacking style was due to differences of taste ; this is borne out by

the fact that men's clothes, where there is less room for such differences, seemed to us of better quality than women's, although there were expensively dressed women. Children were occasionally in rags,\* but they did not look in the slightest degree undernourished, and could be seen spending their roubles at the street barrows where ice cream and fruit juices and sweets were sold. The weather when we arrived, moreover, was hotter than it had been for many years, so that the more informal one's dress the more comfortable one was. We got the impression that there was no need to "keep up with the Jones's", so that food came before dress, if a choice had to be made.

The shops in Moscow seemed on the same general "utility" level as the clothes. They were crammed with goods of all kinds, and usually thronged with shoppers, but most of the window displays were rather dull, though some were excellent. There were hoardings spaced along the main roads advertising life insurance, ice cream, perfumes, road safety, jam and even motor cars and the newspapers had plenty of advertisements, but publicity had not been developed to the point to which the Western world has pushed it.

There are many other impressions which ought to be recorded—the complete equality of the sexes, for instance, so that while there were many women judges, doctors and members of Soviets, they also worked alongside men in the mines, mending roads, driving cranes and trucks in the foundry of the Zis factory, for equal rates of pay. But the most important impression of all that we brought back with us was that with all the differences between us we were very much like each other. We laughed at the same jokes and responded in the same way to kindnesses. Again and again we were struck by the resemblance between a Russian or Ukrainian we met and his opposite number in this country—the farmer, the trade union leader, the mining engineer.

We had heard claims that there were no beggars, prostitutes or drunkards in the Soviet Union. There were no obvious prostitutes on the streets, as there are, for example, around Piccadilly, in London. We saw beggars congregated round the monasteries while services were on; our interpreters told us that they had no need to beg but were simply making a good thing out of it. This seemed to be true. We also saw merry parties in the streets of Kiev on a Sunday night. These evidences of our common humanity made the Soviet Union much more believable, but we were impressed by the high standards of public behaviour in general.

The attitude which was encouraged towards work, deeming it to be not only a right but a privilege, seems admirable. Yet the bad housing conditions must make family life very difficult and provide an additional incentive for mothers to go outside their

\*See photograph, page 70

homes to work, leaving their children all day in nurseries. A good nursery may be much better than a bad home, but this system does give the state a great control over the children.

On the other hand we saw every evidence that children and young people who have special gifts or skills are allowed to develop them, and incentives are provided to encourage each worker to improve his own position while a good community spirit is nevertheless maintained. In the University, for example, we were told that the expulsion of a student for bad work is regarded as a disgrace to his whole class, who should have helped him.

It is not surprising that many intellectuals who know that in pre-Revolution times they would have been illiterate peasants, are strong supporters of the Communist system and shut their eyes to its faults, if indeed they see them at all.

The whole conception of political liberty as we understand it seemed strange to them. One of the religious leaders we met, an able man and a deeply sincere Christian, was shocked at the way our politicians attacked one another. How could our newspapers write such unfriendly things about our Prime Minister? he wondered. In Russia, he said (echoing words that go back far into the history of his country), they considered their leader to be the father of his people, and it is not right to criticise one's father. This was another instance of what we were finding constantly: that, far from feeling the lack of liberties that we consider essential, they much preferred to be without them. That, it seemed to us, was where Mr. Morrison's letter to *Pravda* (which arrived in Moscow while we were there) missed the point.

"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity." It was not only in politics that our hosts were surprised at the smallness of the first category in which we thought complete unity was necessary. They found it difficult to understand, for instance, that although we all belonged to one small religious body all seven of us differed so widely in our behaviour; only one of us was a vegetarian, one a smoker and so on. Incidentally, to judge from the arguments that were put forward to us at discussions, it seemed to be assumed that as Christians we were therefore fundamentalists; the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of Noah's world, were adduced to prove that God was not a pacifist.

At times we felt ourselves to be visiting a different age from our own. In some ways the Soviet Union is passing through a historical stage that we have outgrown, and historical processes cannot so easily be by-passed. Nor is it necessarily right to judge their system by our standards, or indeed to judge it at all. Above all, we should not copy those things we cannot approve.



## Chapter 11

### Aftermath of the Visit

**H**ARDLY any of us realised, when we left Heathrow airport for the U.S.S.R., how much work it would involve us in on our return. We expected to have to report to our own executive committee, the Meeting for Sufferings of the Society of Friends (a name which dates back to the time when the main business before the committee was consideration of the imprisonments, fines and other penalties imposed on early Friends for their defiance of the law in adhering to their own principles). We knew that we would probably be called upon to visit Friends in their local Meetings and to tell them of our experiences and our impressions; but we did not expect the enormous public interest that was, in fact, aroused. No doubt this interest was due in large part to the generous reaction of our national Press, and to the opportunities that we had for speaking on the radio and television. We certainly did not expect to collect mountains of Press cuttings, to have tape recordings asked for by over 300 radio stations in the U.S.A., to have the opportunity of writing for mass circulation periodicals, to have urgent invitations to address meetings and to talk privately to church leaders and politically interested persons in several European countries. Everywhere, in the British Isles, in the U.S.A., in France, Switzerland, Germany, Holland and Scandinavia, we found ordinary people anxious to hear at first-hand something of the Soviet people, to know whether they are oppressed and enslaved by their leaders, whether the children are well cared for or starving, to know whether the leaders themselves are honest men or villains, whether they are for peace or for war. This was reflected in such questions as—

"Did you ever see anyone smile?"

"Did people look round to see who was listening before talking to you?"

"Is it true that all Russians have to go barefoot?" (This from an American boy of 16).

"Do the children look happy and well-fed and does the relationship between parents and children seem to be a good one?"

"Did the Soviet politicians whom you met impress you as being sincere, and if so how do they explain the discrepancy between Soviet words and Soviet deeds?"

"Do the Soviet politicians really believe that the Communist and Capitalist systems can co-exist?"

"Did the delegation gather the impression when speaking with officials, say with Malik, that they mean the same sort of thing by 'peace' that ordinary people mean, both here and no doubt in Russia?"

Questions of this type have been answered, at least in part, in the earlier chapters of this book.

Our meetings have often been attended by people already conditioned either favourably or unfavourably towards the Soviet system, and their questions have reflected the trend of their thoughts.

"Did you ask to see slave labour camps and if not, why not?"

"Did you ask to see any of the old Russian leaders who are in prison, and were you refused?"

"How do you know that there are any political prisoners or prison camps in the U.S.S.R.? Did you see any of them?"

"Did you ever mention the 'Soviet wives', and what answer did you get if you did?"

"Did you visit the Kolyma goldfields?"

"How do you know that the Baptist Church was not packed with people in order to fool you?"

Some of these questions clearly indicated a misunderstanding of the motives of the Society of Friends in sending a delegation to the U.S.S.R. We did not go as inquisitors, as judges or even as crusaders. Nor did we over-estimate our own influence or importance in the Soviet Union. Indeed, we sometimes found that those to whom we were talking had little or no idea at all who we were. In England, thanks to the integrity of early Friends and to the services rendered by such well-known Quakers as William Penn, Robert Barclay, Elizabeth Fry, nearly everyone has heard of the Quakers, even if they only think of them as queer people who used

to wear poke bonnets and say "Thee" and "Thou," but don't seem to do it nowadays. In the U.S.S.R. we could start with no such assumption. We were simply a "delegation." Our main purpose was to promote understanding, to increase goodwill, to break down suspicion. We could not possibly have done this if we had begun by demanding to see forced labour camps and individual political prisoners or Soviet wives separated from their British husbands. Nor did we evade these questions altogether; that would have been an equally artificial attitude. Perhaps we had no conscious technique of approach to the problem; but what in fact happened was that we tried first of all to show by our conversation and our attitude that although we might be critical we were friendly, that we wanted their well-being and that we wanted to understand their point of view. Then as opportunity offered we introduced the discussion of these bones of contention, though not in a contentious way. On our way back to Moscow from the Monastery at Zagorsk we saw a party of men working on the road, guarded by armed soldiers; and on looking enquiringly at our Soviet companions we were told that they were criminals. This gave us an obvious opening for a discussion on political prisoners, from which it was clear that the Soviet people to whom we were talking did regard opposition to the present regime as a crime (compare Appendix II), and saw nothing wrong in restraining, punishing or "re-educating" those who were guilty of it. Any suggestion on our part that conditions in political prisoners' camps are particularly bad was obviously resented as a slight upon their administration; if not indeed as hypocrisy in view of what they regard as the "oppression" of colonial peoples and the "theft" of the natural resources of colonies by the Western powers. In fact we got as good as we gave. But all the same, we had established a firm enough friendship by this time for our hands to be wrung with unusual warmth at the end of our journey, in order to show that the discussion had left no ill-feeling. Nor on the other hand, did it do any obvious good, except to help us to understand, although we did not accept, their point of view. If we had asked, and had been allowed, to see a forced labour camp, it would not really have helped either to improve their conditions or to improve understanding in this country. Few people would have been prepared to believe that we were not being shown a "model camp," laid on for the benefit of credulous delegations from abroad. Margaret Backhouse did attempt to make one suggestion in our final meeting with the Peace Committee that would, if it had been put into practice, have the effect of breaking the silence that sometimes seems to close in on the political prisoner. This was that prisoners, if not allowed to write ordinary letters, should at least be allowed to send printed postcards to their relatives, of the "prisoner-of-war" type on which sentences can be crossed out. Mr. Tikhonov agreed to forward this suggestion to the "proper quarter," but we do not know whether this was done.

An opportunity also arose for mentioning the effect that the Soviet Government's decision with regard to the "Soviet wives" had had in this country. In our interview with the editorial board of *News* we explained how much indignation, how much pity, how much hatred had been aroused by this one arbitrary act of injustice to a few individuals. Again we felt that it would do no possible good at this stage to re-open a discussion of the arguments for and against the action taken, but that it was important that they should understand the instinctive attitude of millions of Western husbands and wives on a question such as this.

Some questions that we were constantly asked, until we forestalled them in our addresses, were of the type which show how many people in the West suspect the Russians of pulling wool over the eyes of visitors:

"Were you satisfied beyond all shadow of doubt that you were not the victims of deliberate deception?"

"Were your daily activities arranged for you?"

"Was there anything that you asked to see or visit that was refused?"

"Were you permitted to explore freely and unaccompanied?"

"Did any or all of you speak Russian?"

"How do you know that your interpreters told you the truth about what was said to you and about conditions generally?"

"How were you treated by the Customs officials? Were any of you searched?"

Other questions were factual. Indeed, it sometimes happened that after a long session of political questions, a housewife would come up to us privately and say, half-apologetically, "I know this is not as important as the other questions, but I do want to know..."

"What are the shops like in Moscow? Are they all big stores, or are there little shops too, and is there much to buy, and are there many people buying? Do they have sales? Is there plenty of food or are there shortages of some things? How are the people dressed? Did you talk to ordinary people? What are their homes like?"

Many of these factual questions related to the social and economic system:



"Is there much traffic on Moscow streets, and what classes of people own cars?"

"Is there much advertising in Russian cities?"

"How many people share a two-, three- or four-roomed flat in the new apartment blocks?"

"Do members of the Communist Party get any kind of preferential treatment in the allocation of flats, cars and so on? Or in entrance to the Universities?"

"How does the Soviet Government treat blind people, old people and the war-disabled?"

"What are the schools like? What is the educational system in Russia? What is the qualification for University entrance? Is University tuition free?"

"What is the judicial system?"

"Is there universal franchise, and how are elections arranged?"

"How are the collective farms run?"

"How is taxation carried out? Is it mostly direct or indirect?"

"Is there any private enterprise in the U.S.S.R.?"

"Are married women obliged to go out to work?"

"Are there any big discrepancies of income and of styles of living?"

Some of these questions we could answer easily; others, and in particular those relating to questions of privilege, we could only have answered by hearsay, while some answers are given, better than we could give them, in reference books (see Appendix II). We could only corroborate the information available there from our own experience or enquiries. We could give it life.

The same applied to questions relating to the Trades Unions in the U.S.S.R., to pension schemes, to care for the blind and the war-disabled, and treatment of child-delinquency.

There was one question, however, that was really difficult to answer on the spur of the moment without giving a wrong impression one way or the other; and perhaps it should be emphasised here

that although after a time we got used to certain questions, we had no stock answers to them and each treated them in our own way. Indeed, people who had heard several of us speak at separate meetings declared that our speeches, though not contradictory, were quite different in their individual approaches. This most awkward question, given here in the form in which it was put to Paul Cadbury in the U.S.A. was:

"What signs did you see of rearmament; did you see soldiers on the streets; is the draft stepped up?"

A short answer to the first part of that question would have been "None," but such an answer would obviously be misleading.

The answer given by Paul was:

"Taking these questions in reverse, Russia has, I believe, always had conscription . . . and of course that means in a great country that there is a very large standing army. We saw practically no soldiers on the streets, except men on leave. We saw quite as many of these here as we did in Moscow or Kiev, and we saw no sign whatever of military display . . . I must be honest, I saw only one body of marching troops. As we were going out one evening to one of our many evening meetings in Moscow, we saw a body of soldiers, very smart. I thought, now we've seen the Russian army, and our friends the interpreters said, 'Ah, that's interesting, I'm glad you saw that. They're changing the guard at the Kremlin, they do it every night.' And I was reminded that only a week before I had seen them changing the guard at Buckingham Palace.

"We were not conscious of a great military power. When it comes to rearmament, they have an enormous potential which they can still change over to rearmament in their house rebuilding programme. I was chairman of the Housing Committee of my own city of over a million people for some years, and I know something about housing programmes. I wish that we had in England anything like the slum clearance and rehousing projects which we could see everywhere. In Moscow, they have a number of great skyscrapers going up, and many schemes of big, multi-storey apartment blocks. In Kiev the same, and there they have a very large rebuilding programme from the damage of the war because it was the larger buildings which were destroyed. At the Institute of Town Planning, I saw pictures of perhaps twenty of the largest cities in the U.S.S.R. These were convincing proof that building projects were going forward all over Russia. This is a civilian stake in peace which could be still switched to war, which, in my opinion, if this armament race goes on, will be switched to war production."

Most of the political questions were difficult to answer objectively because they required a certain degree of judgment on our part, of assessment of motives, or of prediction of future action. Some were easier than others :

"Do you think that the U.S.S.R. intends war?"

"Were you content with Mr. Malik's answers to your questions ; if not, why not, and did you say so?"

"Do the Russians admit to having any direct influence in Korea or China?"

"Do the Russians think of the United States as controlling Western policy? What is their opinion of the United Nations?"

"Is the fear of industrial and economic competition at the base of our difficulties?"

Questions relating to the conditions in the satellite countries and to the relationships between these countries and the U.S.S.R. were almost impossible to answer from our personal experience alone. We could only refer to the impression (unanimous, but possibly superficial) left by our one night in Prague, referred to in Chapter Two, and to the fact that we were told that we would get our Czechoslovakian transit visas a half-an-hour after we got our entrance visas for the U.S.S.R., which we did. When we commented in the Soviet Union on the difference between the reports we had had of the unhappiness and the discontent in, say Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany, and the contentment, or apparent contentment, of the Soviet people we had seen, the reply was that the Soviet people were also unhappy in the first stages of their new regime, because of the internal conflicts between old and new habits and the difficulty of discarding selfish ways of thought, but that this was a phase that would be lived through and outgrown. Needless to say, this reply did not satisfy us, although it is true that every revolution has had its birth pains. But were the changes in Czechoslovakia and East Germany real revolutions?

Other questions have shown an interest in the reactions of the Russian people, either to their own Government or to us, or to intervention from outside :

"Did anyone ever criticise their Government to you?"

"Did anyone voluntarily speak English to you, apart from your interpreters?"

Some of us have vivid recollections of a very sweet girl of about 15 years old, who helped to get our supper at the Baptist Church service and who was most anxious to try her English on us and to know whether the accent was good, as she wanted to be an interpreter when she was older. We also had conversations in English, French or German with a number of other people, old and young.

"Did the Russian Press say very much about your visit? If so, what, and if not, why?"

"Do the Russians listen to broadcasts from abroad and what do they think of them?"

A question of this type : "What is your opinion of the Voice of America?" was answered by Paul Cadbury in the U.S.A. as follows :

"Well that is a very difficult question. I have never heard the Voice of America, and I do not quite know the line it takes. But what I am quite sure of is this, that I do not think it will make much impression on a people who do not understand what it is all about. Now, I do know Mr. Herbert Morrison, our Foreign Secretary in England. Just before we went to Russia he was invited by *Pravda* to write a letter which they said they would publish ; and he wrote a letter all about freedom and things like that, and they did publish it ; and when I read the letter, having just got back from Russia, I knew why they had published it : because the people just wouldn't understand what it was all about. They think they have freedom, I must emphasise this ; and if you have never known any other freedom, you are ignorant of what it means. Their idea of freedom is that they can either buy *Pravda* or *Izvestia*, or they need not buy either—perfectly free ! And the idea that it is a greater freedom for you to buy one of twenty papers, all of whom are free to say the most awful things about each other and anything else, just does not occur to them. And so when you ask about the Voice of America, the only voice that I think that the Russian people could hear from America is if America did something really generous in the international field. But in America's present state, if I may speak as a Britisher, I don't feel that you are in good shape to do and say this sort of thing at the moment. I feel that we must get past this present feeling of tension, and then the true voice of America will, I think, be heard."

Sometimes we were asked what individuals can do to improve the present position. There is no doubt that the world has a high temperature. It may be years before we are out of the danger zone. Everyone can contribute something, however little, to the lowering



of the temperature, if they try to replace fear by understanding and hatred by patience and appreciation.

The difficulties of intercourse and communication, and possibilities of improvement, perhaps even as a result of our visit, have been reflected in many questions.

"Do Russians ever show any wish to be able to visit England or countries outside Russia?"

"What obstacles exist to the exchange of students between Russia and the Western countries?"

"Did you suggest exchanges of students, to live in private homes?"

"Why won't the Russian government allow ordinary tourist traffic?"

"Are you in correspondence with any of the people you met in the U.S.S.R.?"

The answer to the last question is that there has been some correspondence with Mr. Morozov, the editor of *News*, and some personal scientific correspondence by Kathleen Lonsdale conducted through the Academy of Sciences, but that private correspondence, although hoped for, has not materialised.\*

The attitude of intellectuals to the Soviet system was, of course, a matter of interest in University circles.

"Are Russian scientists content with the present regime? Did you feel that they were speaking freely to you? Is there state interference with research work? Do Russian scientists show any signs of realising or admitting the unscientific character of dialectical materialism?"

These questions which have been put to Kathleen Lonsdale because of the scientific contacts that she made are, in general, impossible to answer. Her contacts were limited and conversation was confined to scientific matters, to difficulties of communication (referred to in Chapter 9) and, in reply to their enquiry, to Friends' work for peace. She naturally refrained from asking questions which if answered one way would seem merely to be a rubber-stamping of Marxist philosophy, and if answered the other way might have sounded like treason. The one Institute she visited was engaged in fundamental research work of a kind similar to that done in University laboratories in any part of the world, and

\*There has also been some group correspondence with the Baptist leaders met in Moscow.

there was no sign there as far as could be seen of any state interference or of insistence upon the prior importance of technical applications.

The question of the practical effects of Marxism—Leninism on foreign policy is obviously of great importance: "Does the Soviet Government believe that an international war is the inevitable end of capitalist economies and if so, is not the Peace Campaign hypocritical?" The answer to that is that Marxist philosophy may indeed teach that in a capitalist world international war, like death, is inevitable, but that it is not therefore inconsistent of them to wish to put it off as long as possible. We do not commit suicide because we know that one day we shall die of old age. Nor is this attitude inconsistent with their being willing to take advantage of any difficult local situation to forward the cause of world Communism, if this can be done short of world war.

Our constant attempt to remain objective and yet reconciling has been, perhaps, a little tried by the kind questioner, who, knowing the Quaker testimony for simplicity of living, has asked "Were you not uncomfortable in the luxury of a Moscow hotel, and did you not say so?"

It is true that the hotel in which we stayed was luxurious, although we had asked for our accommodation to be simple. We certainly had no wish to go back to the days of the early twenties, when one of our number, wishing for some quiet sleep in a Russian hotel, had stood the legs of his bed in tins of paraffin, only to be told laughingly that "they" would fall on him from the ceiling. We had actually been warned by well-wishers in England to take ample supplies of an insecticide with us. Some of us did! This we were glad to find was quite unnecessary. Our interpreters were so horrified at the idea that we had even imagined it might be, that they offered us one hundred roubles for each bed-bug we found! We did not claim it. The rooms were spotless, clean towels were placed in our private bathrooms every day, and hot water was unlimited. To have complained of this hospitality, or of the gargantuan meals which appeared in the dining-room whenever we did, would have been most ungracious, even if some of us would have preferred simpler fare. The hotel food was superb and it was amusing to see the extreme chagrin of our waiter when the vegetarian member of our group apologetically refused both meat and fish. Presently he would beam his way in with a special dish of eggs or rice to replace what had been so incomprehensibly sent back.

The hospitality we received from our Soviet hosts was only rivalled, perhaps, by that we received from Sir David and Lady Kelly at the British Embassy in Moscow, where we dined (a light,

simple meal, we were thankful to find) off silver plate. Some of us, comparing our experiences here with past experiences in prison, or in prison-camp or in other hard surroundings, felt that we could almost say with the apostle Paul "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound."

There have been many questions about the changing state of society, and these have revealed a general assumption, especially in the U.S.A., that the existence of a "new rich" must also imply a very depressed and poor working population, and that there must, therefore, be the seeds of a counter-revolution. One dear Quaker lady at a purely Quaker meeting in New York asked "Can we not collect some money and fly it over and drop dollars as an act of goodwill to the 'poor' people of Russia?" It is true that there are big discrepancies of income, but it is not true that the poorer people looked depressed or discontented, as far as we could judge.

It is interesting to note in this connection that Sir David Kelly in the *Sunday Times* of 18th November, 1951, said, "One thing we must not count on: the wishful thought that the Russian people are seething with discontent against the regime . . . The total deprivation of personal freedom is not felt as one hopes it would be here. Nor as yet is the growth of privilege, for both are in the Russian tradition and there is no standard for comparison with the outside world."

Sometimes it is felt that we do not get accurate reports in our own newspapers of what is going on in the U.S.S.R. and it is necessary to explain the difficulties under which foreign newspaper men operate in the Soviet Union; and the difficulties also which the very unfavourable exchange rate or other restrictions impose on those newspapers that would like to have a correspondent in Moscow but cannot afford or are not allowed to do so. On the other hand, when we have spoken of the lack of knowledge of British social conditions which we found in the U.S.S.R., and ascribe this in part to the fact that they read Dickens and H. G. Wells, we have sometimes been asked the very awkward question:

"What good readable English books could you, or did you, recommend to Soviet readers as giving a fair impression of English social conditions to-day?"

Questions about modern Russian writers have also, unfortunately, found most of us rather ill-informed; and some of us have been disconcerted at being asked our opinion of contemporary Russian art, which we did not in general admire, although we could testify to the artistry shown in the display of treasures in the museums

and art galleries, and in the care taken in restoring the paintings, ikons and decorations of the Soviet churches. We were also most interested in seeing the work of the colony of artists and craftsmen of the village of Palekh, near Moscow. The Moscow Metro stations, described in Chapters 3 and 10, provide an impressive example of State-patronage of modern art and architecture, to which we could refer.

Naturally we were asked questions about the relationship of the Church and the State, about Communism and Christianity, and about pacifism and conscientious objection to military service in the U.S.S.R.

"Is it not a fact that no member of the Communist party is allowed to profess the Christian religion? Would a man be expelled from the Party if he were seen in Church?"

The answer to this question has been given quite plainly by Lenin in an early article on "The attitude of the Workers' Party towards Religion" which is reprinted in "Lenin on Religion" (1947).

"Social-Democracy builds its whole philosophy on the basis of scientific Socialism, i.e., Marxism. The Philosophic basis of Marxism . . . is dialectical materialism . . . which is absolutely atheistic, and definitely hostile to all religion."

He goes on:

"If a priest comes to co-operate with us in our work—if he conscientiously performs party work, and does not oppose the party programme—we can accept him into the ranks of Social-Democracy . . . A political party cannot examine its members to see if there are any contradictions between their philosophy and the Party programme. Of course, such a case would be a rare exception, even in Western Europe; it is hardly possible in Russia. . . . We must not only admit into the Social-Democratic Party all those workers who still retain faith in God, we must redouble our efforts to recruit them. We are absolutely opposed to the slightest affront to these workers' religious convictions. . . . The party of the proletariat demands that the government shall declare religion a private matter, but it does not for a moment regard the question of the fight against the opium of the people—the fight against religious superstition, etc.—as a private matter."

"Do the Church leaders show any signs of dissatisfaction at the restrictions imposed on them?"

No; after a period of difficulty and persecution those we met showed rather every sign of satisfaction at the present relatively high degree of freedom of worship allowed to them. Questions



about the lack of Sunday Schools were met by the remark that children could be taught religion at home, although we had some doubts whether children who spent 12 hours a day in day nurseries could have sufficient time in their own homes to be taught anything there. The Orthodox Church is assisted by the State to the extent of having many of its older buildings kept in good repair as "ancient monuments," while they are still retained as places of worship. This applied to the Monastery at Zagorsk.

"Are there any pacifists in the U.S.S.R. and how are they treated?"

The Baptists told us that there used to be a pacifist group in Russia—the Molokany—to which one or two of those actually present had belonged which had later become absorbed in the Baptist Union, and which after 1926 had decided to conform to the Conscription laws of the Soviet Union. They told us also (and this confirmed what had been told us by Mr. Korneichouk as applying to the Ukraine) that provision for conscientious objection to military service did exist in fact if not in law, although very few men availed themselves of it. There were, they said, a large number of exemptions from military training in peace-time: teachers, Stakhanovites, University students and other key people were not called up: a natural result of the immense supply of man-power implied by a young population (see Appendix II).

"Do you think that religion will die out in the U.S.S.R. as the result of indoctrinating the children with anti-religious propaganda?"

No. If we thought this we should be denying the power of God. Let us at least have as much faith in "that of God" working in the hearts of men, women and children everywhere, as Lenin had in the inevitability of religion's withering away, once the social conditions of men were improved. Some forms of religious dogma, doctrine or practice may die out, but not religion itself.

Some questions concerned the position of the Catholic and Jewish Churches, and here we could only refer our questioners to the reports of the National Union of Students, or of a British Trades Union Delegation. Our own meetings with the Baptist and Orthodox leaders and visits to their Churches have been described in previous chapters. We could not answer questions, either, which enquired about the sale in bookshops of Bibles or of religious periodicals. We did, of course, see Bibles in the churches, but had not attempted to buy one.\*

\*This matter was more carefully investigated by the Quakers who went in April 1952 to the Moscow Economic Conference, and they found that Bibles were not on sale in book-shops. They also found that a Catholic Church in Moscow was open and services were regularly held there subject to the same restriction in respect of the teaching of children. There was one Catholic Training College for priests.

Finally, many questions were naturally asked about the possibilities of continuation of our work. Some people, whose minds could be read like a book, asked:

"Are Friends proposing to send a Mission to the U.S.A.?" and these were told of the work continually being carried on by American and British Friends in their own countries.

Others asked whether Friends could establish a permanent centre in Moscow or elsewhere in the U.S.S.R. and had to be told that it was unlikely that the activities of a concerned Friend or group of Friends would long be tolerated in a country which forbids the organisation of religious groups or circles for any purpose other than that of worship.

In summing the reactions of the general public to our visit we can only feel a sense of humility that our mission should have been so much trusted here and that so much should have been expected of us. Very often we have felt concerned that we were being asked to draw so many general conclusions from what was, after all, a very short visit. And yet it was an opportunity of a kind that comes to very few people in a lifetime. Perhaps the most penetrating question of all was that which asked what value our visit may have had in the Soviet Union itself. The answer is that we do not know. We have sown a few seeds. Some may have fallen on stony ground. They did not apparently travel far, because we had a poor Press—we did not say the right things. They may appear to have died, but we believe that such seed sown in prayer—and we were conscious all the time of the prayers of many, continually upholding us—does not die.

We have been able to bring back to our own Society and to many others in the West a message of encouragement and of renewed faith in God. We have been conscious of a longing for understanding among those to whom we have spoken, and of a deep sense of thankfulness that even one small reconciling attempt should have been made to bridge the gap between West and East. More such attempts should be made. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

## Chapter 12

### The Peace Campaign. Is it genuine?

WE have been constantly interrogated since our return on the question of the attitude of the Soviet Government and people to the problems and possibilities of peaceful agreements with the West and on the significance of the Communist peace campaign. Reference to this campaign in its international aspects has been made in the chapters of this book dealing with Quaker meetings with the World Peace Council and with the Soviet Peace Committees. It may be helpful to attempt some answer to the question as it bears upon the internal situation in the Soviet Union and upon the attitude of the world outside to the policies and actions of the Soviet Government in this field. But to do so is to move on to speculative and controversial ground.

The word to which everything else was related while we were in the U.S.S.R. was "peace." It was this word that appeared most frequently in the slogans nailed up on the walls in factories, farms, public buildings, even the prison we visited (the Czech version was as frequent in Prague). All the vast capital developments were used as evidence of the Soviet people's desire for peace. Would we be building a new university in Moscow, we (and other delegations) were asked, if we thought a war was coming in which an atom bomb would blow it to pieces? We saw no reason to doubt the sincerity of these words; on the contrary we saw plenty of evidence (as is reported elsewhere in this book) that whatever the motives of the official peace campaign the desire of the ordinary people for peace was entirely genuine.

All the important church leaders in the Soviet Union are members of the Soviet Peace Committee and ardent supporters of the Peace Movement. So are the scholars, writers and artists. The phrases that they use are stock phrases, and yet we found it impossible to believe that they are insincere. What we did find it difficult to understand was their tacit assumption that peace could be based on a campaign of hatred and vilification. *Pravda* and

*Izvestia* daily carried articles attributing the most discreditable motives to whatever the Western politicians did, and seeking out whatever oppression in the U.S.A. and the British Empire they could find to report. We were constantly reminded, of course, that much of what we tried to tell them was as unconvincing to them as we found what they tried to tell us. Why, if we in the West wanted peace, did our magazines (or at any rate American magazines) carry articles showing how Moscow could be atom-bombed? they asked. Why, if we wanted greater intercourse between the Soviet Union and the West, did our Government refuse the Sheffield visas? Some of these questions were easier to answer than others.

Many people outside the People's Democracies denounce the Peace Movement as a communist attempt to find a basis of collaboration with left-wing progressive forces throughout the world, an attempt to reconstitute the popular front of the Communist Party. Others go further and denounce the Stockholm appeal as one of the cleverest political documents of the century and denounce the Peace Movement as a subversive attempt to encourage short-term pacifism which will sap the will of nations to fight for their independence.

Wherein lies the truth? It is difficult to make an assessment after such a short visit to the U.S.S.R. Many an adherent of the Peace Movement finds strength from the fact that he is one out of a hundred million signatories of the Stockholm Appeal, or the appeal for the five-power pact. It answers his need for security on the one hand and his loathing for war on the other. Such people, as has been said, see peace slogans everywhere in the Soviet Union—in museums, in hotels, in factories and even in public lavatories. Very often the slogan is "Peace with Stalin." There is—or at least there was while we were in the Soviet Union—a constant emphasis on the importance of peaceful construction and on the possibilities of peaceful coexistence. The virtues of peace are being extolled as the virtues of war were only too frequently extolled in Nazi Germany from 1933 onwards and the contrast is not without importance and encouragement. The effect is certainly to imprint on the ordinary Russian mind the necessity for peace and a hatred of war.

Taken in conjunction with an often bitter and still largely-sustained anti-western propaganda, what does all this mean? A realistic assessment will recognise that there is plenty of internal justification for the peace campaign. In the first place it enables the Soviet government and the party to discredit the Western Powers whose re-armament and particularly that of Western Germany is treated as wholly aggressive and unwarrantable. Secondly, and this may be its chief purpose, it acts as a spur to greater production since greater production can be given the justification of serving peace as the greatest of human needs. Conversely the alleged



aggressive intentions of the West can be used to justify more and more personal effort to strengthen the Soviet Union economically against its enemies. Thirdly, it provides a valuable stimulus to loyalty to the regime and the party which are represented as champions of the most noble of all human causes.

Many simple folk and some intelligent ones are convinced that somehow the Peace Campaign is the condition of the good and the creative life, and that membership of the movement is the best means to defend peace.

How will people who have been brought up to be ardent supporters of the Peace Movement react in the event of war? Not as pacifists. They will probably fight with a greater intensity against those whom they will condemn as the aggressors and who will be held responsible for breaking the peace and halting once more the mighty effort at peaceful reconstruction which is going on in the U.S.S.R. and in the countries of the other People's Democracies.

Even so there is, we believe, a genuine core and a genuine potential for peace about this campaign which it is neither right nor sensible to ignore. There is no question that the Russian people want peace at least as eagerly as the peoples elsewhere. They want it perhaps more articulately because they can still see vividly the effects of war and because they know there still faces them an immense task of reconstruction and modernisation.

As for the men of the Kremlin, the evidences are that they also wish to avoid general war though that does not mean that they are yet ready to abandon or modify aims and practices which if persisted in may make ultimate conflict with the West probable if not inevitable. They certainly fear atomic war on their cities. They fear the destruction of their peaceful constructions—their "great projects" as they call them—of hydro-electricity, irrigation and the like. They fear too—and this is probably the immediate explanation of their peace campaign at home and abroad—that if the scale and pace of Western re-armament goes on they (the Russians) will be obliged to enter the arms race in a way and to a far greater degree than they have done as yet. They fear, that is, that they will be forced, if there is no relaxation of tension, to divert substantial resources from peaceful construction to war preparation and to ask from the Russian people new economic sacrifices which in view of existing living standards it is politically inexpedient to demand.

As their contrasting if not contradictory actions indicate there is an ambivalence to-day in Russian policy as indeed there is comparable ambivalence in the policy of the West. There is an internal

tension where Soviet foreign policy is concerned which has still to be decisively resolved. How it is resolved will depend not only on the predilections of Soviet leaders themselves but on the attitude towards the Soviet Union of the world outside. Moral duty, political wisdom and common sense alike oblige us in the West not necessarily to take their peace offers at their face value but certainly to approach them with an open mind and with a determination to use them to the full in the interests of an authentic peace.

At present fear and self-interest dominate our diplomacy in almost every field. For example, we fear the re-armament of Eastern Germany, the Russians fear the re-armament of Western Germany and the German people themselves naturally desire to be united and free from foreign interference. Similar deadlocks exist elsewhere. Yet we are all brothers, and the good of one is the good of all. This mutual advantage should be the aim of true diplomacy.

To sum up our conclusions on this vital issue: it is clear that the Russian people are terribly afraid that the Governments of the West do intend to attack them and destroy their country. They do not believe that the peoples in the West want war, but they believe that there are powerful vested interests in Government and business circles that do. They are encouraged to believe this by the Soviet Press and by their own leaders.

We still feel that the **Partisans of Peace** movement is a political one. It has captured the imagination of the Russian people. Of that there is no doubt. They want peace and believe in the peaceful intentions of their own government. Nevertheless we believe it to be a movement designed rather to improve the bargaining power of the Soviet Union than to promote real reconciliation. It needs to be radically transformed if it is to heal the wounds or to dispel the hatred, fear and suspicion that exist everywhere in the world. But to meet it only by abuse, by ridicule and by intensification of re-armament, is neither good psychology nor wise statesmanship.

"It is yet to be seen," we said in a report to the Executive body of the Society of Friends on our return from Moscow, "whether the Soviet Government—as other governments—is ready to make the practical contributions which peaceful agreements between East and West require. But the time may well be approaching when the sincerity of the declared purpose of Western re-armament—namely to make possible effective negotiations—is going to be tested. In any case we can testify from our experience to the more conciliatory temper towards the West which prevails in the Soviet Union to-day, and to the persistence with which the necessity of peace and of peaceful understandings between the major Powers is being commended to the Soviet people. To close our hearts and

minds to these signs, to reject all approaches without reflection or without the presentation of positive alternative proposals where we think that those presented to us are inadequate, is surely to betray the deepest need and deepest hope of peoples everywhere for a world at peace."

## Epilogue

WE have already said that our object in going to the U.S.S.R. was threefold: firstly to take a message of goodwill to the Soviet people from the Society of Friends; secondly, to find out something of the position of religion in the U.S.S.R.; and thirdly, to discuss with influential people of all kinds the methods that must be used to achieve peace and understanding. It was inevitable also that we should see something of the conditions of life in the U.S.S.R. and bring back a report; but although public interest in this aspect of the visit has been great, that was not one of our main objects.

Friends believe that there is "that of God" in every man. This does not mean that we think we are all gods. It does mean that every man is capable of being and doing good, and of recognising good in others; but it means also that if we get down to a deep enough level, we will always find truth, love, generosity, pity; no man is wholly insincere, wholly cruel, wholly selfish. Moreover we believe in the power of God; we believe that truth can overcome error, that love is more powerful than hatred, that generosity can rise above greed and that goodness will triumph over evil.

This is the essence of the Christian religion; but it is not this that is understood as religion by many of those who attack it. It is often thought of only in terms of superstition, or "pie in the sky." Marx said, "Religion is the opium of the people"; and this postulate is the corner-stone of the whole philosophy of Marxism with regard to religion. Lenin was absolutely certain that once social oppression had disappeared, religion would disappear too. He therefore laid it down that the propagation of atheism must be subordinated to the development of the class struggle, that is, to the elimination of the social roots of religion. This is clearly explained in his letters ("Lenin on Religion," Lawrence and Wishart, 1947). It is not to be denied that religious superstition has played its part in social oppression. An early Friend, John Woolman, wrote in 1772:

"... I was then carried in spirit to the mines where poor oppressed people were digging rich treasures for those called



Christian, and heard them blaspheme the name of Christ, at which I was grieved, for His name to me was precious. I was then informed that these heathens were told that those who oppressed them were followers of Christ, and they said among themselves—'If Christ directed them to use us in this sort, then Christ is a cruel tyrant' . . ."

Men who profess to be Christian have forgotten that Jesus said that to be righteous one must feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, take in strangers, clothe the naked and visit those who are sick or in prison. They have forgotten the words in the letter of James; "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled'; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit? . . . The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." If an atheistic community were to arise, which had eliminated social oppression without introducing oppressions of new kinds, it might be said, in some ways, at least, to practice Christianity without professing it; whereas too often the Church and State have professed Christianity without practising it.

But Jesus did not commend only the second commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"; he put first "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength." A passion for social justice is not enough. Food, clothes, houses and education are not enough, although that is no excuse for denying them to others. Life is not just eating and drinking, reproducing and dying; it is not even laughing and crying, learning and loving. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth." To desire that all men and women may share the good things of the earth; to work that this may come about; these are the by-products of a Christ-like life. Unless we do this, we have not even begun to realise what true religion means. But those who concentrate entirely on the material side of life, even in the best sense of the word "material," and leave God out of their considerations, are leaving out all that is most important if, in fact, God exists. "Admit a God," says Newman, "and you introduce among the subjects of your knowledge a fact encompassing, closing in upon, absorbing every other fact conceivable." Admit the God of Jesus Christ and you are bound to treat all men, however debased, depraved or afflicted, as being of value. You cannot crush men in the interests of "the greatest good of the greatest number." You cannot yourself assume the power that treats men as things, as cogs in a machine, or as subjects of dispassionate and unemotional experiment.

Our danger, as professing Christians, is that we may accuse others of doing just that, and not realise that it is we ourselves who are doing it. We do not rely on God, that is, on the power of love, truth, goodness and generosity. We pay lip-service to these, but we put them in cold storage "until such time as the whole world is Christian" and meanwhile we rely on the power of armaments, on stockpiles of atomic bombs, on strategic bases, on conscription, on economic coercion and on military pacts.

One of the most important considerations that we feel led to stress as the result of our visit, therefore, is that we should meet Communism not by a negative condemnation, but by a positive determination to make a reality of our own profession of Christianity. John S. Hoyland has written a prayer that we may pray for those who are dear to us, which contains the words:

"We pray Thee for their well-being,  
For their exceeding happiness,  
For Thy grace upon their souls,  
For Thy spirit springing up and blossoming  
into their lives,  
That they may be servants and tools of Thine."

If we felt the urge constantly to pray this prayer, not only for those who are specially dear to us, but for those whom we do not understand, who have rejected the faith we claim to hold and who deny the existence of the God we try to serve, we would be more like Him.

We do not, as Friends, claim that we ourselves are living up to the high ideals that we have here expressed; but it is in this spirit and only in this spirit, we believe, that true redeeming and reconciling action is possible. Evil and hatred are rampant in the world to-day; but they cannot be met and conquered by other evils, by force, suspicion or revenge. Men speak peace with tongues that drop vitriol, or offer a hand of friendship that is a mailed fist. That is not the way that wars will cease. Evil and hatred can only be conquered by goodness and love, the kind of love that a mother or father has for a child who has taken the wrong road, the love that will not let go, the love that we believe that God has for all his children, a love that always involves suffering, because it is redemptive.

We long to liberate the oppressed, but Gandhi rightly insisted that the oppressor is doubly entitled to be redeemed; and in fact it is only by the redeeming of the oppressor that oppression will ever cease. By using, or being prepared to use, methods that involve more and more indiscriminate suffering, that increase the amount

of wanton destruction, that divert the world's resources from the alleviation of poverty and ill-health, we are not only raising and nourishing the very passions that breed oppression, but we are, in our concern for some, leaving millions of others to live and die in misery. These we forget because we do not dare to remember them; and we find ourselves confronted with this dilemma simply because we are not using God's ways; we are not co-operating with Him; we are acting as if He did not exist.

The use of God's methods, which are not coercive, will not and cannot wipe out injustice and oppression overnight; it will not change all warmongers into peacemakers or all Pharisees into penitents in the twinkling of an eye. It may involve the kind of suffering that Jesus endured when he cried, "My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" and the kind of suffering that His Father endured as He heard that cry, a cry repeated by thousands of men and women to-day. But it is only as we set ourselves the task of building the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, with clean hands, and pure hearts, and a deep and loving concern for both the oppressor and the oppressed, that the causes of wars and oppression, misery and injustice, will disappear. And it is this message that is needed most to-day by the peoples of the East and of the West alike.

## Appendix I

*Report of interview with Mr. Jacob Malik, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, at the Foreign Office in Moscow, on 26th July, 1951.*

SOME days before the interview with Mr. Malik, our group had sent to the Foreign Office in Moscow, under a covering letter addressed to Mr. Gromyko, the statement reproduced below. At the outset of the interview Gerald Bailey reminded Mr. Malik that the group had come to the Soviet Union as officially representing the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain—"a Society whose faith and practice has for three hundred years placed a central emphasis on peace and reconciliation between nations and groups and individuals; on the spiritual unity, that is, of all peoples." After a reference to the work for East-West understanding already undertaken at the United Nations and elsewhere by American and British Quakers, Gerald Bailey went on to say: "We have no desire to usurp the responsibilities of statesmen nor do we claim to have the competence to do so. That would be inappropriate for us as primarily a religious group. But we are deeply concerned about the international situation and the drift towards war. We are profoundly anxious to do what little we can while we are here to encourage the prospects of at least a more accommodating spirit and co-operation between the Soviet Union and the West.

"We want if we may with all respect to address an appeal to you and to the Soviet Government. We have been greatly encouraged by the prospect of an early ending of the Korean war and we want to express to you our sincere appreciation of the initiative you took in this matter. But we are concerned that peaceful negotiation should be extended to other points of tension between East and West. We are especially concerned that some concrete steps should be taken to lower the temperature of international relations and to establish the confidence between Governments which is essential if they are to reach peaceful agreements. Naturally since we are in this country we have thought particularly of the initiatives which the Soviet Union itself might take. But we thoroughly



understand that peace requires mutual action and that these initiatives would require reciprocal action by the Governments and peoples of the West."

After briefly summarising the seven points of the written document, Gerald Bailey said: "We believe that the Soviet Union has a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to challenge the world with a peace programme of this scope, of this spirit and this imaginativeness. We are sure that if you took a lead of this kind you would enlist the sympathy of the vast majority of the peoples and get a favourable response from most if not all of their Governments."

The statement we had previously submitted ran as follows:

We have come to the U.S.S.R. out of a deep concern to help in whatever degree to promote a genuine and lasting peace between the nations. We have come to plead with the Government of the U.S.S.R. — as we have pleaded on other occasions with other Governments including our own — for the constructive actions which will lessen international tensions, remove the paralysing fear of war which besets the peoples everywhere and open the way to a fruitful co-operation between all countries in advancing the well-being of their peoples.

We would respectfully urge upon the Government of the Soviet Union that following upon its initiative towards a peaceful settlement of the Korean war which has given fresh hope to the world, they should take the initiative in presenting a programme of reciprocally-based action to extend and consolidate a true peace before all Governments and particularly the Governments of the Great Powers. We would respectfully submit for the consideration of the Government of the Soviet Union the following points upon which such an initiative might be based:

(1) A willingness, subject to reciprocal action, to restrain hostile propaganda against the West and to permit the publication of responsible statements expressing the peace aims of Western Governments.

(2) A willingness, subject to reciprocal action, to permit a measured opening-up of intercourse on a non-political basis and through visitation and correspondence between professional groups and individual persons in the U.S.S.R. and the countries of the West.

(3) A willingness to give pledges of non-intervention in action or in spirit and directly or indirectly in the internal affairs of non-Communist countries on the understanding that corresponding pledges, disavowing any counter-revolutionary purpose in Communist countries, are given by countries of the West.

(4) A willingness to share in a radical, general and internationally-controlled disarmament and to consider sympathetically all methods of achieving such an agreement, whether conforming to the Soviet concept of proportionate reductions or not.

(5) A willingness to co-operate in a world plan for mutual economic aid to improve standards of living in all countries, provided such a plan is organised within the framework and under the control of the United Nations and is used to promote and not to prevent the peaceful social revolution which is under way in economically and politically backward countries.

(6) A willingness to facilitate the admission into membership of countries at present excluded from the United Nations and to join in consultations designed to improve the machinery and the operation of the United Nations as an instrument of peaceful co-operation between the peoples.

(7) A willingness to enter into great-power conversations at the highest level designed to establish agreement on the major principles embodied in the above proposals as a preliminary to detailed discussions on the various issues at a later stage.

We are confident that if the Soviet Union were prepared to commit itself to a peaceful initiative couched in this spirit and directed to these ends it would enlist the sympathy of the great mass of the peoples in all countries and elicit a favourable response from most if not all of their Governments.

Mr. Malik then read to us with some minor improvisations and corrections a statement, in reply to our seven questions, which had evidently been prepared in the Soviet Foreign Ministry. This statement was translated section by section by the Foreign Office interpreter, Mr. Poliakov. We were not supplied with a copy of the text, but the whole reply was taken down by several members of our group, and having received Mr. Malik's permission, we subsequently published the text appearing below, which was checked from the various records made at the time.

Mr. Malik said:

"I have listened attentively to the statement made by Mr. Bailey which in my opinion reflects the desire of the people of Great Britain to maintain and strengthen the cause of peace and to promote friendly relations between countries and peoples.

"In order to understand better the position of the Soviet Union in the questions relating to the consolidation of peace and the promotion of friendly relations between the nations, I would

like to outline the programme which is followed by the Soviet Union and Government in their struggle for peace and friendly relations between the Soviet Union and other countries, including the countries of the West.

"I would like to point out that the division of nations into what is called East and West is a relative division and so far as this matter is concerned one cannot discuss it in detail and at length since some of the countries are both East and West as far as the geographical point of view is concerned.

"The programme of the Soviet Government concerning the strengthening of peace and the promotion of international security includes the following components :

- (1) Co-operation between the Great Powers which found and finds its expression in the proposal to conclude a Pact of Peace between them.
- (2) The reduction of arms and the unconditional prohibition of atomic weapons with the establishment of international control over this prohibition.
- (3) The strict and absolute observance of the Potsdam decisions on the German question.
- (4) The conclusion of peaceful settlements with Germany and Japan.
- (5) The development of trade and economic relations between all countries.

"The conclusion of a 5-Power Pact might well ensure a return of the U.N. to its original mission, which is to organise and to promote international co-operation based on the principle of big and small Powers. The conclusion of the Pact might ensure the possibility of all-round progressive and simultaneous and controlled disarmament which would lead not only to a cessation of the arms race but to a full prohibition of the atomic weapon and other weapons of mass destruction. The conclusion of the Pact of Peace might ensure the establishment and development of normal economic relations and cultural relations between various countries.

"All these points will be set forth by me in detail and I shall try to explain at length the position of the Soviet Union in connection with the questions which have been put by Mr. Bailey in his statement and are of interest to all other members of your delegation.

"In respect of the first question which relates to hostile propaganda, I would like to make the following clarification. The Soviet Union has invariably stood and stands for the cause of peace and a policy of co-operation with all the countries desirous of such co-operation. The Soviet Union doesn't threaten anyone. It has no predatory aggressive plans and it can have none. The policy of peace and co-operation rules out hostile propaganda. It does not conduct hostile propaganda against other countries. Quite the contrary. The Soviet Union in a decisive manner insists that the U.N. should take effective measures designed to ban the dissemination of slanderous information and war propaganda. Slanderous and hostile information and propaganda for war present a danger to the cause of friendly relations, and hinder the consolidation of peace and international co-operation. War propaganda leads to the aggravation and exacerbation of relations between countries and anyone who is really anxious to strengthen peace and struggles against new sufferings of humanity cannot pass over this question.

"It is well known that the Soviet Union at the 2nd session of U.N. in 1947 introduced a proposal for the prohibition of war propaganda. The Soviet delegation pressed for the adoption by the Assembly of this resolution and voted in favour. The Soviet Union consistently and invariably sticks to this position. No-one can name any Soviet politician, military or any other public figure, who would call for an attack against the U.S. or England or any other country. A special law is passed in the Soviet Union which punishes those who try to conduct a war propaganda. At the 5th session of U.N. the Soviet Union, introducing its proposal covering the declaration on the removal of a threat of a new war, advanced a proposal that the Assembly should condemn propaganda for a new war which is being conducted in a number of countries and called all States to prohibit such propaganda and bring all persons violating the prohibition to account.

"This was rejected by the aggressive nucleus of the U.N. headed by the U.S.A. As pointed out in the statement of the Soviet representative at the U.N., hundreds of American journals (despite the U.N. desire) come out with hostile propaganda against the Soviet Union, making up and fabricating fables and insinuations against the Soviet Union and disseminating lies about the Soviet Union. Such statements are also made by prominent statesmen of the U.S.A. and Britain who try to depict the peaceful policy of the Soviet Union as an aggressive policy while depicting the aggressive policy of Britain and the U.S. as peaceful. By slander against the Soviet Union the statesmen of Britain and the U.S.A. try to justify an arms race in their countries and try to draw people into a new world war.



"As for the **publication of statements** expressing peaceful intentions one should not have any doubt that such statements which are really designed to strengthen peace will always be warmly responded to by the Soviet Union. I will cite a contrary example from the U.S. Their organs and bodies of information and propaganda banned from any showing in the news reels, or on radio or television, of the passages from the statement of the Soviet representative at the U.N. dealing with the necessity for the peaceful co-existence of the two systems and which contained references to the statement of Stalin in his answer to the American journalist to the effect that the peoples of the Soviet Union and the Government of the Soviet Union wished that a military clash between the two countries might never arise.

"As to the **second question** (need for freer intercourse between the Soviet Union and the West) — that is of contact between delegations and individual persons—it is well known that there is no ban on the exchange of delegations and public organisations nor is there any ban on correspondence between such organisations and individual persons in other countries. On my arrival here I found eight letters from the U.S.A. and Great Britain! (Aside.) As late as September last, replying to the analogous question of the Maryland Committee of the Struggle for Peace—that is, does the Soviet Union stand for free exchange of ideas and information between the American and Soviet peoples with a view to the mutual understanding which is indispensable for the maintenance of lasting peace? — I gave a definitely positive answer. The fact that there is no such ban in the Soviet Union is confirmed by the fact that your delegation is here. Of the existence of correspondence between individual persons in the Soviet Union and other countries, there is evidence in the Soviet Press and in other publications. Your delegation is evidently aware that the delegations of a number of Trade Union organisations visited the Soviet Union both last year and this year. In their turn the public and Trade Union organisations of the Soviet Union sent their own delegations to Great Britain. Suffice it to give these data :

"In the course of 1950, the Soviet Union was visited by 162 foreign delegations from 32 countries in which 2,134 persons took part. Among these delegations 9 were from Great Britain comprising 74 persons. These delegations were sent by British public and Trade Union organisations, as for instance the National Union of Students, the Foundry Workers, the Electrical Trades Union, the Society for Cultural Relations, by women's organisations, etc. The Soviet and public Trade Union organisation in the course of 1950 sent delegations to 22 various countries. There were sent in all 193 delegations from the Soviet Union with the participation in these delegations of 1,893 persons. 9 delegations were sent to Great

Britain having 28 participants. In the course of the first six months of 1951, 111 delegations, comprising 1,288 persons, were sent from the Soviet Union to other countries. Of these, 6 delegations have been sent to Great Britain—women's, youth, Co-operative organisations among them. In the course of this same period (January to June 1951) the Soviet Union was visited by 110 delegations from 28 countries with 1,366 persons. Five of them were British delegations with 54 persons. These delegations represented workers, students, teachers, Trade Unionists and representatives of public organisations in Great Britain. So how does it stand? The facts go to show that there is no ban in this respect. At the same time we can call to mind the fact that when Shostacovich was denied the right to give a concert in the West in 1948, this made an unfavourable impression. There was also the refusal to grant visas to the prominent representatives of Soviet science, culture and literature for the Congress of the Partisans of Peace in Great Britain. Such are the well-known facts.

"As to the following question relating to **non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries**. It is known that the Soviet Union, invariably standing for the cause of peace and peaceful co-operation, strictly abides by the principle of the sovereignty of all countries. This position is adopted by the Soviet Union in the United Nations organisation where the domestic questions of countries arise. The Soviet Union strictly carries out the provision of the Charter as to non-interference. The Soviet Union, on introducing at the Fifth Assembly of the United Nations a resolution on the development of international trade, proposed that this development should be carried out without discrimination and on the basis of equality. This proposal of the Soviet Union was turned down by the delegations of the U.S. and Great Britain.

"The following question which is touched upon by Mr. Bailey has an extremely great importance, namely the **question of disarmament**. You are of course aware that the Soviet Union has on many occasions introduced its proposal for the immediate proceeding to the reduction of arms and the immediate prohibition of atomic weapons. The Soviet Union proposed a one-third reduction of armaments in 1950-51 and suggested that a further reduction of the armed forces should be considered by the General Assembly at one of its following sessions. Such is the standpoint of the Soviet Union in respect of the reduction of arms and armed forces. One can also call to mind the answer given by the Soviet representative in the United Nations to a question put to him by the Maryland Committee to which I have referred. This question asked whether the Soviet Union stands for general disarmament and for the prohibition of the atomic weapon, provided that a strict control and inspection was established within the framework of the U.N. The

representative of the Soviet Union gave the positive answer that the Soviet Union stands precisely for that. The delegation of the United States, characteristically it must be pointed out, evaded a direct answer to this question. The 5-year history of the United Nations shows that, thanks to the efforts of the ruling statesmen of Great Britain and the United States, proposals of the Soviet Union for disarmament have been rejected.

"The following question is also of great importance, namely the development of trade and economic relations between countries. The programme of the Soviet Union for strengthening peace comprises also as an integral part the development of trade and economic relations between all countries. The Soviet Union has introduced its proposals based on this principle on many occasions in the U.N. When the Fifth Assembly was examining the question of the elaboration of the 20-year programme of attaining peace through the United Nations, the Soviet Union, among other proposals, proposed the provision of technical assistance to economically backward countries on the principle that the purpose should be to promote the development of the domestic resources and the national industry and agriculture of economically backward countries and to strengthen their economic independence. Further, that such assistance should not be conditional on compliance with any demands for political, economic or military privileges for countries rendering such assistance. The Soviet Government proposed the development of international trade without discrimination on the basis of equality and respect for the sovereignty of all countries and without interference in their domestic affairs. This proposal was rejected by the delegations of the United States and Great Britain.

"As to the question of the admission of new members to the United Nations and steps to improve its machinery. The position of the Soviet Union in respect of the admission of new members, and in particular in respect of the admission of those countries who have already applied, has been sufficiently clearly set forth in many declarations and statements of the Soviet representatives in the organs of the United Nations. At the fifth session of the Assembly of the U.N., as well as at previous sessions, the Soviet Union introduced its proposal that the Assembly should recommend to the Security Council that it re-consider the applications of the 13 States which have already applied. The States are Albania, Mongolian People's Republics, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Finland, Italy, Eire, Portugal, Transjordan, Austria, Ceylon and Nepal.

"The Soviet Union stands for the admission of all these States to the United Nations and objects to the so-called policy of favouritism pursued by the Governments of the United States and Great Britain, the essence of which is to admit to the U.N. some and to deny this admission to others without any foundation. As to consultation designed to improve the machinery and work of the

United Nations, it is well known that the Soviet Union took the most active part in the creation of the United Nations. The Soviet Union proceeded from the assumption that the strength of this international organisation lies in the fact that it bases itself on the principle of the co-ordination of the actions of the Five Great Powers and the inadmissibility of the isolation of any of these Powers. This implies that the action of the organisation will be effective only on the condition that the Great Powers keep to this purpose. Guided by this principle, the Soviet Union has always actively participated in the examination of the work of the U.N. as a whole as well as in the examination of all important questions which have been discussed in this organisation, and has introduced its appropriate proposals designed to better the work of the U.N. Throughout the existence of the United Nations, the Soviet Union has undertaken steps designed to strengthen this organisation, standing out against all attempts by States to violate the Charter of the United Nations and to circumvent the Security Council upon which the main responsibility for peace and security is placed.

"An eloquent confirmation of the fact that the Soviet Union in the course of the history of the United Nations has taken steps aimed at the strengthening of this organisation, is provided by the principal proposals which have been introduced by the Soviet Government at the various sessions of the General Assembly. At the first session we put forward proposals for the general reduction of arms and the abolition of the atomic weapon. At the second, we proposed prohibition of propaganda for a new war. At the third session we made another proposal for the prohibition of the atomic weapon and for a one-third reduction of armed forces. At the fourth session we renewed a proposal for condemnation of propaganda for a new war and proposed the conclusion by the Five Great Powers of a Pact of Peace. At the fifth session, the Soviet delegation proposed a declaration for the removal of the threat of a new war and for the strengthening of peace between nations. Mr. Stalin, in talking to *Pravda*, has once more laid emphasis on the fact that the United Nations was created as a bulwark for the maintenance of peace. The Soviet Union, participating in the most active manner in the formation of the United Nations and taking steps to strengthen it, proceeded and proceeds from the assumption that this organisation should become a reliable organisation for the maintenance of peace and should carry out its Charter obligations to free the coming generations from the scourge of war. However, as is evident and well known, thanks to the ruling circles of the U.S.A., backed by Great Britain and France and united in the military aggressive bloc, the United Nations is being turned increasingly into a weapon of war and at the same time ceases to be a world-wide organisation of nations endowed with equal rights. The Governments of these States, and the Government of the United States in particular, have



infringed the principle of co-ordination of the action of the Five Great Powers and the inadmissibility of the isolation of any one of these Powers. These Powers systematically conduct the policy of the isolation of the two Great Powers, the Soviet Union and China.

"As for the suggestion that the Soviet Union should take an initiative for world peace. The Soviet Union has on many occasions taken steps designed to arrive at an agreement on all important questions both on the lines of the United Nations and on the lines of the Council of Foreign Ministers. The readiness of the Soviet Union to enter into negotiations of a maximum business-like character with a view to agreement, is evidenced by the recent proposals of the Soviet Union for the convocation of the Council of Foreign Ministers and the active participation of the Soviet representative in the preliminary conference on this question in Paris. As is known, the reaching of agreement on this question was frustrated by the efforts of the representative of the United States, with the active support of representatives of Great Britain and France, at the preliminary conference. Such a position cannot be looked upon otherwise than as an attempt to preserve the existing international situation. Such are the facts."

## Appendix II

### Soviet Background

MANY people do not realise that much of the truth about Russia and the Russians is already theirs for the trouble of consulting a good modern reference book. (Not all the truth, of course. No reference book can bring real Russians to life, however accurate its facts may be). In Chapter II we have given an account of some of the questions that we have been asked again and again, both privately and in public meetings, since our return. Many of these are factual: about education, about collectivisation, about social services, about Trade Unions and the electoral and judicial systems. They are already answered in, for example, the 1950 edition of *Chambers' Encyclopaedia*, and further information is available in articles in the periodical "Soviet Studies," (published for Glasgow University, by Blackwell's, Oxford, from 1949) and in the "Bulletins on Soviet Economic Development" (published by the Faculty of Commerce and Social Science, University of Birmingham).

We had the opportunity of obtaining and confirming some of this information at first hand in the conferences and discussions that were described in Chapters 3 to 8, and at the same time we got to know something of the people who are actually working the system. In this Appendix, however, we give only the background information that was available to us already before we left Great Britain and that is, in fact, available to everybody.

First of all, it is important to realise that the word "Russia" is not synonymous with the "Soviet Union." The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) was first organised in 1922, after the 1917 revolution had disintegrated the old Russian Empire. The word "Empire" had fallen into disrepute; we ourselves have replaced it by the phrase "Commonwealth of Nations." The U.S.S.R. is a federation of sixteen Republics, one of which is the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (R.S.F.S.R.). Under the Stalin constitution of 1936, the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. consists of two Chambers. The first, the Chamber of the Union,

consists of deputies elected on a basis of one to every 300,000 people, and hence the number is variable for the different Republics; the second, the Chamber of Nationalities, has 25 deputies from each Republic and a smaller number from each of the sub-divisions of these Republics, 574 deputies in all. These Chambers meet, separately or jointly, only for a short time twice a year, usually to hear reports from their own presidium and from the Council of Ministers, in whom the real authority of government is vested. The presidium of the Supreme Soviet consists of a president, 16 vice-presidents (one from each Republic) and 24 members; this presidium is the real legislative authority. The Council of Ministers, however, has supreme executive authority and can legislate by decree.

These 16 Republics do have the constitutional right of secession, if they please. But there is no likelihood whatever of their using this right, the trend being rather towards further unification. One can as well imagine the State of, say, Massachusetts seceding from the United States of America. By an amendment to the Constitution, of 1st February, 1944, the constituent Republics may organise their own military formations and may enter into diplomatic relations with foreign countries. Any amendment to the Constitution requires a majority vote of not less than two-thirds in each of the two Chambers of the Supreme Soviet.

All male and female citizens upwards of 18 years old (except those who are insane, or who are deprived of civic rights by a court of law) may vote, and the franchise is secret, but there is only one party to vote for: the Government party. Voting is not compulsory: a citizen may vote for or against the candidates, or not vote at all. The right to nominate candidates is secured to certain organisations and societies: Communist party organisations, trade unions, co-operatives, youth organisations and cultural societies; and every citizen of the U.S.S.R. who has reached the age of twenty-three is eligible for election to the Supreme Soviet (Article 135 of the Constitution) "irrespective of race or nationality, sex, religion, education, domicile, social origin, property status or past activities." In fact, however, only those candidates who are approved by the Communist Party (though not necessarily members of it) have the chance of getting the 50 per cent. of votes needed for their nomination to be effective.

Actual Communist Party membership is not large (five million in a total population of about 200 million) and according to *Pravda* of January 1940, party members then held 72 per cent. of all seats in the republican soviets, 51 per cent. in town soviets and 24 per cent. in village soviets, where active Communists are, of course, fewer numerically. The recorded numbers of anti-Government votes are negligible, and the percentage of actual voters is very high. The

lists of candidates contain a considerable proportion of scientists, athletes, Stakhanovites, artists, etc., and this undoubtedly means that much care and discussion is involved at the "nomination" stage in order to produce lists of a broad popular character.

Nevertheless, the influence of the Communist Party and, in particular, of the Politburo, with its hierarchy parallel to or overriding that of the constitutional machinery, is of course immense. (In the 'Cavalier of the Gold Star' it was made clear that the local party organiser had a large say in the affairs of the collective farm).

The Russian S.F.S.R., although theoretically of equal status with the other 15 Soviet Republics, is in fact, much the most extensive and important of them. It covers more than three-quarters of the total area of the Soviet Union, extending from Eastern Europe across Siberia to the Pacific and from the Arctic Circle to the Black Sea. It contains nearly two-thirds of the total Soviet population. The average density of population is low, only 17 per square mile (as compared with 180 per square mile in the Ukrainian S.S.R. and with 743 per square mile in England), but this is because it includes the vast and sparsely-populated areas of the far North. The Central Region, having Moscow as its focal point, has an area about six times that of England and its population is a little greater than that of England (41 million). It accounts for nearly one-third of the Soviet Union's industrial production. Something like one-tenth of the coal of the U.S.S.R. comes from the Moscow-Tula basin. Moscow itself is on about the same latitude as Edinburgh, but it has a much more extreme climate because it lies in the middle of a large land mass and lacks the moderating influence of our Gulf Stream. Moscow grew up around the Kremlin, with its palaces and cathedrals, and is first heard of in the 12th century. Four-fifths of the town was destroyed in 1812. (Incidentally, Moscow school-children are still finding and bringing in to the 1812 Museum, which we saw, cannon-ball fired by Napoleon's army. Such trophies are constant reminders of the invasions suffered by Russia in the past). Rebuilt, Moscow had a population of 380,000 in 1861, 1,620,000 in 1913 and over four million at the time of the last census (1939). It has a planned maximum population of five million. This rapid increase in population made it essential to increase the water supply, and an 18-foot deep canal now connects the Moskva (Moscow) river with the Volga. This was opened in 1937 and provides continuous navigation for big steamers from late March to mid-November, after which it is ice-bound. The rapid increase in size of Moscow has also precipitated the housing crisis, which is so obvious even to the casual visitor.

Four hundred miles to the north-west of Moscow is Leningrad, the second city of the U.S.S.R. It is about as far north as the



Shetland Isles, but suffers from a very long winter although it is no colder in January than Moscow. Founded by Peter the Great in 1703, it was formerly known as St. Petersburg and became the capital of Russia instead of Moscow. From 1914 to 1924 it became known as Petrograd, but ceased to be the capital in 1917, Moscow becoming capital both of the R.S.F.S.R. and of the whole Union. In 1924 its name was changed again to Leningrad. Its position, so near to the Finnish border, was a bad one for a capital; it was, as Diderot said, like having one's heart at the end of one's fingers; and it was especially attacked during the period of foreign intervention following the 1917 revolution. Again attacked during the second World War, although never actually captured by the Germans, this most beautiful city suffered greatly. Its supply-routes were cut, its industries practically eliminated and its people starved. The population of Leningrad has fluctuated greatly with its political vicissitudes. In 1915 it was 2,347,000, in 1920 only 722,000 and in 1939 over three million. As the result of the incorporation of the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R. into the Union in 1940, Leningrad is now less exposed to attack by land. It is the U.S.S.R.'s greatest Baltic seaport, but requires ice-breakers to keep it open in the winter-time. The railway which connects it directly to Moscow, built in 1851, was the first main line in Russia, and, although passing through most difficult marshy country, it is almost dead straight.

Our group visited three cities of the U.S.S.R.: Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. Kiev, the capital of the Ukrainian S.S.R., is some 450 miles S.W. of Moscow, and about on the latitude of the Cornish Riviera. It is "the mother of Russian cities" and goes back in history to a very early date. It has a present population of over 800,000, and lies near to the centre of what was formerly known as the "bread basket of Russia." The Ukraine, however, is becoming increasingly industrialised and important new grain-growing districts are being developed further east.

In considering the relationship of the U.S.S.R. to the rest of the world, it should be realised that its whole area is nearly eight-and-a-half million square miles, or one-sixth of the total land surface of the world. It is almost three times as large as the U.S.A., and more than four times the area of Europe outside the Soviet Union. Moscow is about 1,500 miles east of Edinburgh, but it is about 7,500 miles west of Vladivostok, the most important Soviet port on the Pacific Ocean. Only the 50-mile-wide Bering Straits separates the Soviet Union from Alaska, in the N.W. corner of the American Continent. The climate ranges from Arctic, with a permanently frozen sub-soil, in the far North, to sub-tropical in the South Caucasus, South Crimea and parts of central Asia; and, of course, the people are of many different races, speaking many different languages, although Russian is rapidly becoming the common language of all educated

people. (This diversity of climate and race within the Soviet Union partly explains why the Soviet people feel no great urge towards foreign travel).

Two-thirds of the Soviet frontier is coast-line, but much of this is inaccessible for part or all of the year, and the U.S.S.R. is not, therefore, a great sea power. In the Far East the Pacific port of Vladivostok is just north of Korea, on the Sea of Japan, and the U.S.S.R. has therefore a great strategic interest in what happens in that peninsula. The Soviet Union has many neighbours along its 5,000 miles of land frontier, from Norway in the Arctic region down by way of Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Rumania to the Black Sea. In Asia it borders on Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, China, Mongolia, Manchuria and North Korea, and is not very far from Pakistan. This long and vulnerable frontier is often quoted as a reason for the Soviet obsession with "defence," one aspect of which has been the policy of using "satellite States" as buffers on the West and South-west. A great factor in the military strength of the U.S.S.R. is, however, the actual size of its population and its high proportion of youth.

A census taken in 1939 showed that half the Soviet population were then 22 years of age or less. This is only one of the amazing facts that can be ascertained by a study of population statistics. The war must have taken a serious toll, both of the young and of the old, but the population of the U.S.S.R. is increasing rapidly and will certainly go on increasing. The tendency of any population to increase is measured by its net reproduction rate (a figure giving the number of potential mothers of the next generation likely to replace each potential mother in the population) and this was 1.54 for the Soviet Union as a whole and 1.7 for Russia, in 1939. The net reproduction rate in Great Britain is 0.89, and although the population is not yet declining it is bound to do so before long; in the meantime it is getting older, because people are living longer. The same is true, generally speaking, of all the Western peoples, although the rate of decline may not be so great. The "young" population of the U.S.S.R. is both expanding and has plenty of room for expansion. The overall density of population is less than 25 people per square mile, as compared with an average of 44 in the U.S.A., and of over 500 in Great Britain. Only about 7 per cent. of the land of the U.S.S.R. is actually cultivated, but according to the *Economic Bulletin for Europe* (Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 25) this amount could be increased to 10 per cent., and the total potential agricultural area, including meadows and rough grazing land, is about 30 per cent. of the national territory. Grain yields are low compared with those of Western Europe, but the total grain production is large and the production of all major crops is increasing. The numbers of the livestock in the U.S.S.R. have failed to rise during the last forty

years owing to the effects of war and the destruction of livestock at the time of collectivisation. The milk yields per cow are much lower than in most European countries, and the U.S.S.R. is therefore making a considerable drive towards improved agricultural methods and there is certainly room for improvement. The social composition of the population has changed tremendously since the revolution. The percentage of town-dwellers in 1939 had risen to nearly 33, as compared with 12.8 in 1914. Whereas before the first World War 65 per cent. of the population were independent peasants and artisans and only 16.7 per cent. were factory workers and office employees, nearly half the population now falls into the last category, and most of the remainder (46.9 per cent. of the whole) are members of collective farms and handicraft co-operatives.

Private farming in the U.S.S.R. has been almost completely replaced by collective farming and, to a much smaller extent, by State farms. It was, indeed, the crushing of the resistance of the Kulaks (individual propertied farmers) in the late 'twenties, leading to large-scale arrests and deportations from the agricultural areas, that has aroused much pity and indignation in other countries.

Collective farms (Kolkhozy) numbered about a quarter of a million in 1938 and included over 18 million peasant households. Each family privately owns its dwelling-house, a small piece of land (one to five acres), some tools and some livestock; but the entire community owns the land, farm buildings, draught animals, cattle, fodder, seed, equipment and so on. If a member withdraws, the value of his share of the resources (except for the land) is paid to him in cash: and he has the right to claim land elsewhere. The produce of the private plots, which must be cultivated outside working hours, and of the family's livestock, belongs to the family; but the produce of the collective farm belongs to the whole community. Members are remunerated, whether in cash or in kind, in accordance with the number of "working days" they have given, but these "working days" are so calculated, according to occupations and skills, that a good worker can perform more than one "working day" in a normal day. Any worker can sell his surplus produce, whether obtained as remuneration or from his own smallholding, in the local open market, where prices are fixed by supply and demand. Some of our group had the opportunity of visiting a collective farm near Kiev and of seeing its working at first hand, and a description of their visit is given in Chapter 6.

State farms (Sovkhozy) numbered nearly 4,000 in 1938, and employed 1,300,000 hired workers under state-appointed managers. Usually they specialise in one crop only. A state collecting agency (Zagotserno) collects the net produce of the state farms and a large part (about 30 per cent.) of the gross vegetable produce of the

collective farms. This covers taxes in kind, payment for services rendered by the state-owned machine tractor stations (each serving about 30 collective farms), repayment of state loans, and crops sold to consumers' co-operatives. The remaining 62 per cent. of the gross vegetable yield is divided roughly in two, half being used for seed or fodder on the farms, and half going to the collective farm members as wages.

An official estimate of the damage done by World War II includes the laying waste of 98,000 collective farms and of 2,890 machine and tractor stations, with the destruction or removal of 137,000 tractors and of millions of horses, cattle, etc. Soviet agriculture, which has hardly yet recovered from the effects of the war, is the subject of considerable research and planning, in order that improves methods may be introduced, and this is co-ordinated by the Academy of Agricultural Sciences. Until the livestock position improved, the clothing position in the U.S.S.R. will continue to be unsatisfactory, for wool and leather are both in short supply, although some are imported. Machinery is the main import, however, and grain and timber are the main exports of the U.S.S.R., a relatively high percentage of this trade being with Great Britain.

The Soviet Union is so nearly self-sufficient in most raw materials, and so relatively under-populated for its size, that foreign and tourist trade is less essential to the Soviet Union than it is to Great Britain, although for a balanced economy certain imports are necessary. This is possibly the reason, or one of the reasons, why the foreign rate of exchange, 11 roubles to the £1, is so unfavourable to Great Britain.

Although the Soviet Union is rich in natural resources, however, these are not fully developed, partly because of difficulties of remoteness, climate, lack of transport and capital. Much attention is being paid to all these problems in scientific institutes all over the Union, and the work of these institutes is controlled and co-ordinated by the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences and by local Academies. The U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences includes in its functions those of our own Royal Society and of our Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. It controls and finances not only the research institutes (some of which are engaged mainly in fundamental, others in applied research) but also research station (biological, maritime and so on), laboratories, libraries, commissions, etc. The President of the Academy has the status of a Minister and his pronouncements express official government policy, while one of the main functions of the Academy is to advise the Government on scientific matters. In 1948 there were 100,000 scientific workers in the U.S.S.R., some fifty times as many as before the revolution.



This impressive increase in the number of scientific workers is paralleled by a general and striking improvement in educational facilities. Before the revolution education was not compulsory and there was a very high percentage of illiteracy. Primary education is now both free and compulsory, from the age of 7 to 14 years; and there are also 10-year schools (secondary schools) in which children stay on to the age of eighteen and which lead on to the Universities or to technical or vocational Institutes. In the last three years secondary school students pay a small fee (50 roubles per annum) and somewhat larger fees are payable to the Universities, although scholarships are available to many students. Textbooks are very cheap, and free meals and even free clothing are provided for poor students. There are now over 30 million children in the schools and over half-a-million students in the Universities and colleges of the Soviet Union. In addition to these, there are special schools of various kinds, and kindergartens for children of three to seven years of age. The curricula are uniform throughout the Soviet Union, although schools employ the language of the locality, Russian being taught from eight years old and upwards. University entrance is by examination, from which only war-service students and school medallists are exempt. State expenditure on education (inclusive of libraries, youth clubs, cinemas and theatres, which indeed are largely educational in the widest sense) amounts to over 8 per cent. of the national income. There are adult education centres and evening classes of various kinds, which provide incentives and opportunities for workers to improve themselves and to be able to take better and more responsible positions. The educational policy is fluid, and modifications are introduced from time to time. Two of the major changes have been an increased emphasis on the cultural (as distinct from technical) subjects since 1934, and the re-introduction in 1943 of separate schools for boys and girls.

Reference has just been made to incentives: In 1930 Stalin declared that an egalitarian society was non-Marxist, and the system of wages is now based on a progressive piece-rate, together with cash bonuses for fulfilment or over-fulfilment of planned output programmes. Article 12 of the Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the U.S.S.R. quotes the principle of socialism as "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work" (not his need), and it also quotes, curiously enough, from the 2nd letter to the Thessalonians, Chapter 3, verse 10, "He who does not work, neither shall he eat." (Note: This is the English translation, presented to us, of the Russian original. One wonders whether those who framed the Constitution realised the source of their quotation! Possibly they did, for Stalin had a theological training and we found a number of leading Soviet citizens quite ready and able to quote from the Bible when it suited their argument). Apart from monetary rewards, however, "public praise" in the form of

titles, medals, and display of the photographs of outstandingly good workers is a very high incentive to production. Income differences are very large, both between different kinds of work and within each work group. Managers in industry, public officials, intellectuals, artistes, Stakhanovites and Heroes of Labour earn the highest incomes and have certain special privileges in respect of housing, employment of domestic help, and when there was rationing they had the right to purchase in the free market. A decree of 1947 makes the guaranteed maximum hours of work eight per day, but there are shorter hours for special categories of workers.

The Soviet Constitution guarantees to all citizens "the right to maintenance in old age and also in case of sickness or disability," and to women "equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, government, cultural, political and other public activity." There is now virtually no unemployment in the U.S.S.R. Trade Unions exist, but they are organised on quite a different basis from those in this country. Their function is certainly to protect the interests of the workers, but they do this by taking an active share in the drafting of legislation concerned with working conditions, and then by helping to make the system work (see Appendix III). Much of the administration of the state social services is in the hands of the Trades Unions, membership of which is voluntary. Trade Union dues amount only to one per cent. of wages and, since non-unionists receive only half the normal benefits, it pays to join. Members of collective farms are not covered by the official schemes, but many farms have their own schemes.

As in Great Britain, state hospitals provide free medical treatment for everyone, but state-employed doctors may, if they wish, engage in private practice in their free time. The fourth five-year plan aimed at the provision of 985,000 hospital beds by 1950. Abortion is prohibited by law, and maternity cash benefits, and a period of six weeks' rest, both before and after confinement, are available for mothers. All workers have the right to a minimum of two weeks' holiday with pay each year, and there are many rest-homes and sanatoria to which workers are admitted at a low rate. The number of those actually admitted to such homes in 1938 was, however, only about one-eighth of the total number of wage-earners, and private hotels or lodgings in holiday resorts are very limited in number. This should be borne in mind in reading Chapter 9. As the country is so large, and rail and road transport is inadequate, there are regular air services linking the capitals of the republics and the principal seaports. Aircraft are also used for fighting forest fires, seeding deserts and for pest control.

Rates of income tax depend not only on the amount of income but on the kind of work done. Workers employed by state or co-operative industries are exempt on the first 150 roubles a month of

their wages, and pay up to a maximum of seven per cent. on incomes over 1,000 roubles a month; independent artisans (who may exist, but may not be employers) pay a surtax of 10 per cent. more; professional people pay from eight per cent. on incomes of 20,000 roubles a year up to 50 per cent. on incomes of over 300,000 roubles. This also gives an idea of the wage and salary range. Money can be invested in interest-bearing public loans; although theoretically voluntary, subscription to these is often, in practice, compulsory in the sense that the staff of a factory will jointly subscribe and the money is deducted from wages. There is no limit, in law or in fact, to the right of Soviet citizens to amass or to inherit personal property (in goods other than those of production). There are no death duties on properties of less than 10,000 roubles; above this amount a 10 per cent. tax is imposed. Most taxation is, however, indirect; this accounts for the high price of such consumer goods as sugar (taxed by 84—89 per cent. of the retail price), soap (62 per cent.), shoes (70—86 per cent.) and so on. In fact this kind of turnover tax may be used to control the sale of goods which are in short supply. Factories pay various rates of profit tax according to whether they are scheduled for expansion or not. This kind of state finance is, of course, the result of state ownership of the means of production and of state planning. The operation of the consecutive four- or five-year plans is an integral part of the Soviet economy and is a matter of wide interest and co-operation on the part of most Soviet citizens.

And what of those who do not co-operate? The offender against Soviet law may be tried in one of a number of Courts, according to the seriousness of his crime. At the highest level there is the supreme court of the U.S.S.R., at the lowest there are the people's courts, one or more in every district. The judges of the people's courts are elected by the citizens of the district for a period of three years and they have to report to the electors about their work, both in order that they may be exposed to public criticism and to assist in the general understanding of the work of the courts. In dealing with criminal offences, even of a character so grave as murder, emphasis is laid on the re-educational approach to punishment, and the maximum sentence is ten years' imprisonment. There is no trial by jury, but appeal to a higher court is allowed. Minor offences, such as habitual lateness at work, are punishable by forced labour at the place of employment, that is, by compulsory deduction of up to 25 per cent. of wages, as a fine. The term "forced labour" or "corrective labour" therefore, does not at all necessarily imply confinement in a place of punishment, although it may do so. Crimes that are regarded as dangerous to the social order, such as arson or embezzlement by corrupt officials, are regarded as counter-revolutionary, and are equivalent to treason. Treason and connected crimes are tried by military courts, and in the case of a deserter from

the army, for instance, not only the man but all his family are regarded as guilty and are punished, a procedure somewhat reminiscent of Old Testament morality. The political police have the power to banish "activities or anti-Soviet parties" from certain parts of U.S.S.R. territory or to certain places, but only under judicial supervision which, however, may be quite formal. Although formal it is necessary in law: since 1938 the political police have not had special quasi-judicial powers independent of those of the normal courts and they cannot overrule the decision of the courts if a person has been declared innocent. (See R. Schlesinger, "Soviet Legal Theory, its Social Background and Development (1945)," "Changing Attitudes in Soviet Russia: the Family (1948)" and articles on "Soviet Law" in *Chambers' Encyclopaedia*, 1950). In the affairs of ordinary life the Soviet police, like those of Western countries generally, are expected to act as agents of law and order with the minimum use of force.

There are children's allowances in the U.S.S.R. for all children, and these become larger as the number of children increases beyond four. Large families are encouraged not only by state subsidies but by "public praise" of the habitual mother, who is given a title of honour. There is no difference in the legal status of children born to married or unmarried mothers; in the latter case the state shoulders the responsibility of paying for the children's maintenance and education. In general, the law protects the interests of the child and husband and wife are otherwise regarded as strictly equal. On marriage they must decide whether to assume a common name (which may be that of either) or each to retain their own. Divorce is now very expensive, though not prohibitively so; it can be obtained only by a decision of the courts after motives have been investigated and all attempts at reconciliation have failed. This is, of course, a change from former practice: until 1944 divorce was comparatively easy. Any practices which perpetuate the idea of an inferior status of women are regarded as criminal, and in particular any attempts to terrorise the emancipated women of the Soviet East are ruthlessly punished as political crimes. If a Mohammedan man kills his wife because she has abandoned the veil, that is not called murder but treason; a far worse crime.

Article 124 of the Soviet Constitution (1947) states that: "In order to ensure to citizens freedom of conscience, the church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the state, and the school from the church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognised for all citizens." Article 122 of the R.S.F.S.R. Criminal Code, Moscow, 1948, states that: "Instruction of the under-aged or minors in religious doctrines in state or private educational institutions and schools or the violations of the rules established for this is punishable by corrective labour for a period



of one year." This is a corollary of the 1929 Collection of Laws R.S.F.S.R., Article 353, of which states (paras. 17 and 18) :

17. "Religious Organisations are forbidden ;
  - (a) To create mutual assistance funds, co-operatives, or unions of producers : and in general to make use of any property which they possess for any purpose other than the satisfaction of religious needs ;
  - (b) to extend material support to their members ;
  - (c) to organise special prayer or other gatherings for children, youths or women, or to organise gatherings, groups, circles or offices, either bible, literary, handiwork or labour, for instruction of religion, etc.

It is also forbidden to organise excursions or children's playgrounds, to open libraries or reading rooms, or to organise sanatoria or medical assistance. In buildings used for prayer only those books may be kept which are essential for practising the given cult.

18. The instruction of any religious faith whatsoever is not allowed in state, social or private educational institutions. Theological courses may be opened with the permission of the N.K.V.D., or in Autonomous Republics, of the appropriate Central Executive Committee."

(The N.K.V.D. referred to here is the Narkannudel, or Ministry of the Interior, which combines such ordinary administrative duties as registration of births, deaths, etc., with those of frontier protection, maintenance of state security, administration of corrective labour camps and so on. The former secret police organisation known as O.G.P.U. has been, since 1934, merged in the N.K.V.D.).

Within these very restrictive limits, all churches, Orthodox, Baptist, Catholic, Jewish and Mohammedan, have freedom of worship—after their own manner in their own buildings. The Orthodox Church was disestablished in 1918, and it is now divided into two sections, the "Old Church," headed by the Orthodox Patriarch, and the "New Church," under a Metropolitan, both with headquarters in Moscow. There has been, since 1943, a Council on the Affairs of the Orthodox Church, functioning under the Council of Ministers, to maintain contact between the Government and the Patriarch. In 1945 there were 20,000 Orthodox congregations in the U.S.S.R. and 30,000 priests, trained in State-allowed Theological Seminaries. The improved relationships between the State and the

Orthodox Church after a period of much suffering and tension are said to be due mainly to the support given by the Church to the Soviet Government during the Second World War.

It will, of course, be realised that the brief survey of Soviet affairs given in this Appendix is incomplete and possibly unbalanced. That is an almost inevitable consequence of its brevity. The statistics quoted may not be entirely up-to-date, for systematic and regular statistics have been difficult to come by since 1939, only data on isolated topics being published from time to time. This survey has been given to show the kind of information that is available even to those who have no opportunity of making a personal visit to the U.S.S.R., and to provide a background that will make some of the references in earlier chapters intelligible (those, for example, referring to the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Supreme Soviet's Chamber of Nationalities, to the status of the Russian Minister of Education relative to his fifteen colleagues of the other Republics, to the restrictions on the Church, the relationship of the Patriarch and the Metropolitan, and so on). As far as we were concerned, it also gave us something of a yardstick with which to measure the accuracy or knowledgeability of our informants in the U.S.S.R. itself ; because it cannot be denied that we were, if not on the look-out for deliberate deception, at least anxious to avoid any charge of credulity on the part of our own fellow-countrymen, particularly in view of the fact that Quaker practice would incline us to be trustful rather than suspicious. And finally, a preliminary knowledge of the customs, laws and social trends of those among whom we were going would obviously help us to understand them, and in understanding to meet them on the level of those things that endure.

## Appendix III

### Visit to Trade Union Headquarters in Moscow

Wednesday, 25th July, 1951

*Note by Mildred Creak*

WE were addressed by Mr. Kudryatsev (Vice-Chairman of the International Department of the Trade Unions) and Mr. Lerner (of the Wages Department of the Trade Unions).

Trade Unions in U.S.S.R. are formed on the basis of a production unit, i.e., a plant or factory. These then come together in 66 branches which work on a wide functional basis, e.g., mine-workers, railway workers, etc. Membership is voluntary, but 75 per cent. to 80 per cent. of the workers do, in fact, join. There are considerable advantages in joining and these are pointed out to every new worker. [We were assured that, apart from this indirect influence, no official pressure was brought on workers by others to join, and no penalties resulted from not joining.] Such advantages include admission to the Trade Union Holiday Home.

Management of the Unions is by a Congress of Delegates of that Union. Meetings must take place not less often than once in two years. Election is by secret ballot. There are Regional Organisations with regional election of Shop Committees. Each of such groups elects a Trade Union organiser and those elected report back at least once a year. The election of organisers by the regional association is also by secret ballot.

Each plant or factory carries some Activists, to help T.U. work in that particular plant. They may organise and serve on committees of culture, of housing, and similar activities. Time off work to perform these functions is allowed for, so that such work is not financially penalised.

#### Committee protecting Labour

Special Technical Inspectors, belonging to the T.U., supervise security techniques. (It appeared from this that the function of H.M.I. is vested in the Trade Unions). Such an inspector may impose a fine if regulations are violated, and can even bring the administration of a plant into court. He can stop work in a factory if security measures are not in force.

Social Instructors assist these Technical Inspectors, and inform them of infringements. They would be primarily concerned in such matters as lighting, noise, ventilation, i.e., the general conditions of work.

Technical Institutes study the various branches of industry and are also concerned with the protection of workers in that industry. (Leslie Metcalf visited such an institute run in connection with the mining industry.)

During the last five years, more than 6,000 plants have been rebuilt or re-organised on lines directed by advice from such Institutes.

#### Council of Social Insurance

Social Insurance is free for all, and is paid for by the State, i.e., it provides an Insurance Fund which the worker uses, but which is genuinely free for him in that he is not called on for a contribution from wages. The factory or plant concerned pays in instalments, and 21 billion roubles are made available in this way.

This fund is used, say, by a worker who is sick, or by women who are off work due to pregnancy. In normal cases a woman gets 77 days pregnancy leave (with pay from this fund). In abnormal pregnancy cases, leave may be prolonged to 96 days. During this time free medical advice is available for the mother — for instance, on feeding her baby.

#### Pensions

These are granted

- (a) To workers injured during work.
- (b) In old age.
- (c) For long service.
- (d) Widows' pensions, and expenses arising from the death of a husband.

The Trade Unions govern the use of all these social insurance funds, and in a way which was not precisely defined, supervises the work of the polyclinic attached to the factory, or the associated health resort.



### **Wages (Dealt with by Mr. Lerner)**

These are governed by the principle of social payment for labour. In other words, labour is an honourable duty, and every man has the right to work, as is reflected in the Soviet constitution.

Every citizen has not only the right to work, but to work as determined by his ability.

He is paid, *not* according to his needs so much as in accordance with his work. Equal payment for equal work is observed throughout the U.S.S.R.

Mr. Lerner remarked in an aside that they are against complete egalitarianism in industry and quoted Mr. Stalin's saying to Emil Ludwig that he did not believe in all getting the same pay in the same amounts, wearing the same clothes, etc.

The stimulus comes from unequal rewards associated with better or less good production. There is therefore a piece rate and bonus system throughout industry.

The 'production norm' and payment rate is fixed by the State, but after joint consultation with the T.U., factory management, and workers. (We were not told exactly how this consultation worked out in practice, e.g., could there be endless disagreement, and an indefinite hold-up?) These rates, once fixed, cannot be altered without giving six months' notice.

There is no upper limit and a fast and skilled worker can increase his speed and his pay over and above this basic fixed rate. There is, further, a progressive piece-rate, so that over and above a certain production standard (*i.e.*, "a penny each, two for twopence") he qualifies for a higher rate of pay ("three for threepence half-penny"). This solves the problem of incentives.

These graded rates of pay, when fixed, are published in a book to which reference can be made, *i.e.*, every job is rated, and every worker graded. But a worker may be up-graded, hence the schools for workers to improve their trade proficiency. Since mechanisation will also improve production (and so result in higher wages), there is a great keenness among the workers to suggest improvements to machines, and to introduce new inventions.

### **Welfare Services**

Most production units will have a crèche and/or kindergarten attached, for working mothers. (This is so in the shops and the University, as well as in the factories).

These make only a very small charge for the care of children. In the case of very large families the parents have the right to send their children over four years old to Nurseries free of charge.

There is a family grant which increases with the size of the family (rather like the piece-rate!) and a mother who has brought up six children gets a decoration, while the mother of ten is called a "Stalin-heroine" and claims very special recognition for her service to the State.

If a worker is ill, he gets full pay and free treatment for from two weeks to two months, and thereafter subject to clearly defined further conditions. If he is sent to a sanatorium or a rest home he pays only 30 per cent. of the cost. Two-and-a-half million workers annually get some form of prescribed holiday.

Other bonus payments include higher pensions for miners working 20 years or more underground.

A University student gets a small stipend from the State during his studies, and its continuance may depend to some extent on his success.

It was pointed out that, in view of these indirect allocations, it was proper to consider income as worth 40 per cent. more than the actual figure.

There is no unemployment in U.S.S.R.

All miners are pensionable at 50, but may continue after that age, if fit, and will then claim both wage and pension.

### **State Trade Reserve**

Some branches of industry afford advanced training in Trade Schools. These admit young workers (both sexes of course) up to 19 years old, and function as apprenticeship schools. Here, as in the University, the students get a small stipend, free clothes and free meals. If they are tried-out in a factory, they earn the ordinary rate plus what they qualify for by their production. Several million graduate in this way, some becoming Stakhanovites (*i.e.*, the nucleus of pressure groups in industry).

These two lengthy talks were given straight, almost as lectures. The departure of two of our members to other commitments made an interruption and gave the opportunity for a firm request for time for questions. We got the impression that this was granted somewhat reluctantly, but only because there was so much more to tell.

The following questions were raised :

**Dismissal ?**

An unsatisfactory worker can be dismissed and anyone can change his or her job. There is a shortage of workers everywhere, as shown by the lists which are publicly displayed advertising vacancies. Anyone who wishes can get another job next day. A worker wishing to leave a job, e.g., a girl marrying a boy in another town, writes a letter to the factory director.

**Direction of Labour ?**

Technically there is none. Some pressure is put on graduates leaving school to go where their work is most urgently required. A trainee from a Trade School is given only a limited number of jobs to choose from.

A graduating physician may be directed to an under-doctored area, as in a rural district. It is obligatory to provide living accommodation for anyone so directed.

**Are there Trade Unions for the Individualist (e.g., writer, artist) ?**

Actors belong to the Theatre Workers' Union. Scientists have a T.U. and so have writers.

**Professional Remuneration (e.g., doctors) ?**

Obviously no piece-rate practicable, but a doctor is paid more if he works in a remote area, if he is especially skilled, or if he accepts particular responsibility.

**Are the T.U.'s directly represented in the Government ?**

Only in the annual consultation between Government and T.U. officials. But many T.U. officials are in fact also Members of the Supreme Soviet.

**Are non-working married women represented by any T.U. ?**

Women with large families obviously cannot go out to work and there is no Housewives' Union. But they get club activities at their husbands' place of work. Or they may be members of their district Soviet, with a special interest, say, in housing. There is no significant proportion of people without some civic interest or responsibility.

**Can the State and the T.U. be in conflict ?**

On a big scale — no. Minor conflicts do take place between factory administration and T.U. workers. A Commission, with equal representation of both sides, meets to settle such a dispute.

If the point concerned could not be thus settled it might be taken to court, but we gathered such a difficulty was rare.

**Meetings — how often ?**

Factory meetings are held annually at which the workers, the administration and the T.U.'s revise rates, etc. Disputes are referred to the relevant Ministry.

This conference was long and tiring, but it answered so many of the questions that had been forming in our minds that I, for one, regarded it as a high-light. Reading between the lines, it told us much about the lives of the men and women in the U.S.S.R. and explained something of their sustained enthusiasm for the regime. In the words of Mr. Kudryatsev, "Labour is a matter of heroism and glory for the country".

E. M. C.